



*THROUGH  
THE WINDOW*

Kinship & Elopement  
in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Keith Doubt



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## **Through the Window**





# **Through the Window Kinship and Elopement in Bosnia-Herzegovina**

**Keith Doubt**



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# Table of Contents

|                                                                                                                  |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Foreword – <i>Elopement, Women and Happiness: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>, by Svetlana Slapšak</b> | vii |
| <b>Preface</b>                                                                                                   | xi  |
| <b>Acknowledgements</b>                                                                                          | xvi |
| <b>CHAPTER 1 – The Study of Elopement</b>                                                                        | 1   |
| <b>CHAPTER 2 – The Liminality of Elopement</b>                                                                   | 13  |
| <b>CHAPTER 3 – An Extraordinary Elopement</b>                                                                    | 23  |
| <b>CHAPTER 4 – <i>Habitus</i> in Bosnia</b>                                                                      | 29  |
| <b>CHAPTER 5 – Deciding in a Blink</b>                                                                           | 39  |
| <b>CHAPTER 6 – The Secret and Elopement</b>                                                                      | 47  |
| <b>CHAPTER 7 – Elopement and Ego-Identity</b>                                                                    | 55  |
| <b>CHAPTER 8 – The Risk of Foreclosure in the Arranged Marriage</b>                                              | 61  |
| <b>CHAPTER 9 – Family Folklore and Elopement</b>                                                                 | 69  |

|                                                       |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>CHAPTER 10 – Affinal Relations after Elopement</b> | 79  |
| <b>CHAPTER 11 – Bosnia’s Kin in Turkey</b>            | 89  |
| <b>CHAPTER 12 – Balkan Ethnology</b>                  | 97  |
| <b>CHAPTER 13 – Bosnian Folk</b>                      | 105 |
| <b>CHAPTER 14 – Ethnicity and Nationality</b>         | 113 |
| <b>CHAPTER 15 – Accounting for Bosnian Culture</b>    | 121 |
| <b>Appendixes</b>                                     |     |
| Survey Report, Mareco Index Bosnia                    | 139 |
| Survey Question in English and Bosnian                | 143 |
| Qualitative Interview Protocol                        | 144 |
| Consent Form in Bosnian                               | 146 |
| <b>Bibliography</b>                                   | 149 |
| <b>Index</b>                                          | 157 |



# Foreword

## Elopement, Women and Happiness: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina

*“There is something in society that cannot be killed with violence, whether it is the violence of nature or the violence of society itself. Even if every member of a society were killed, the memory of that society would remain a part of world history and humanity’s consciousness.”<sup>1</sup>*

This statement from the author, Keith Doubt, uncovers the aim of his book and opens a wider space of resonance for the results of his research. While it is relevant for any research concerned with history and the past, in this case, it introduces hope, happiness, women’s will and action into the Bosnian-Herzegovinian perspectives, too often seen only as bleak, sad, and hopeless.

The author develops his argument in an impeccable academic manner: His research establishes elopement’s significance for the maturation into adulthood in the context of running debates on *rites de passage*; his study compares relations of affinity (*prijatelji* in Bosnian) with agnatic relations called *bratstvo* and fictive relations called *kumstvo* so as to show how *prijatelji* are unique and important to Bosnia, albeit politically vulnerable to nationalism; and, his work assesses the damage on this cultural heritage during the past war from 1992–1995 in order to measure the resilience of this cultural heritage. The aspect that I mentioned earlier remains, however, not only rational but also deeply inspirational, especially in empowering Bosnian-Herzegovinian women. This is one of the quali-

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Doubt, *Through the Window: Kinship and Elopement in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Budapest, Hungary: Central European University Press, 2014), xiii, 136.

ties that makes this book outstanding in the current academic production on gender, war, and Bosnia-Herzegovina and directs it to a much larger reading public.

The great cultural traditions of the West and the East, rooted often in literature, define elopement as something not only irregular and ethically unacceptable, but also tragic in determining the fate of a woman's whole life. Even if the eloping woman has managed a certain stability in her social life, there is a deep felt lack of passion, sincerity, and authenticity in her life, as if she lost a good portion of her identity. Jane Austin's Lydia and Leo Tolstoy's Natasha become ordinary, if not slightly vulgar, compared to what they were before their elopements. Doubt reviews narratives of elopement in different cultures so as to construct the positive particularity of the Bosnian narrative rooted in literature, folklore, personal stories, and the poetics of *cultural intimacy*. Elopement challenges stereotyping with its resulting fixations; nationality, ethnicity, beliefs, prescribed behavior, and stratification are all affected and changed locally and temporarily through the action in which a woman's choice becomes paramount.

This study represents an original work in the sociology, anthropology, and ethnology of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In this interdisciplinary framework, gender studies, cultural studies, folklore, Balkanology, and political philosophy are included, opening a large epistemological horizon for area studies. The results originate from a well-structured and effectuated fieldwork and confirm the reliability of the research.

The author chose the Bosnian social-cultural phenomenon of elopement as a thematic focus. His approach to the topic reveals the situation around the academic production on Bosnia today, with an overgrown interest in war and afterwar topics, often treated with hastiness and shallowness. Specific behavior strategies, which change the Balkan context of ethno-folklore "habits" (including the ruling stereotypes) and give new insights into real people's lives, have not been high on academic agendas all over the world. By choosing one such strategy—the elopements of Bosnian women—the author points to a serious theoretical and methodological draught masked by flashy contemporary treatments of Bosnian culture and, at the same time, gives a model of a different kind of re-

search which could provide more satisfactory and dignified academic results and clearer goals in fostering policies and understanding of Bosnian culture. A subtle reminder of the situation of academic production on Bosnia-Herzegovina appears in the lack of a classical introduction into the topic, which has been replaced by the problematization and criticism of the state of the art in the research area.

The elopement has been treated from the global point of view in order to map out the basic differences and the outstanding originality of the Bosnian custom when compared with elopement's practices and meanings in other cultures of the world. Within the context of Balkan folklore, the elopement has been elucidated against the mixed narratives originating from oral literature and the ethnic and ideological investments of academic authorities. The author insists on discovering and re-reading less known and largely forgotten or censored authors, who did not accommodate their research according to the intellectual and power-oriented mainstream guidelines of their time. But the book is not at any time the search for a canon that is set as its research goal; on the contrary, the elopement is regarded as one of the ways to regulate women's desires in the culture in which love, as one of the almost forgotten authors mentioned, is an admitted and regulative form of behavior. The author then explores the challenge of real life stories, and this is where a highly elaborated methodology, including interviews, appears in the study. The questionnaires are composed with visible sensibility and an acute knowledge of realities of Bosnia and of discursive techniques used by the interviewed. The investigation goes deeper into the social and cultural evaluation of elopement in Bosnia from different points of view: public, ethnic groups, and, so importantly, the women themselves who eloped. This multiple evaluation reveals that the elopement is at the core of the invention and formation of new forms of familiar and external family linking: this aspect of elopement is lacking in most of the otherwise rare studies on the topic. Elopement emerges as a constitutional element in forging new social forms and new cultural clusters in Bosnia. The main argument in evaluation, which is directly related to the women who eloped, is concentrated around "success," that is, the women's assessment of their own lives and consequences of the elopement or

self-elopement. The success of this “success” argument is an overwhelming result of the research.

The author met a number of challenging notions and social and cultural agents that threatened to veil his vision of elopement: the patriarchal rules and sometimes invisible pressures in discursive strategies, the imposed ethnic limitations and horror of any “transgression,” the ruling gender stereotypes and the fear of women’s empowerment, the fine lines of distinction in memories of the socialist period and the censorship imposed on it. The author accepted each challenge in order to draw clear lines of the social-cultural procedure he chose to investigate, but also as a possibility to introduce a distinctive critical perspective and to enable further, more liberated attempts at understanding the Bosnian culture.

The result is an innovative study of an often obscured phenomenon presented in a non-typical form of academic production, uniting interdisciplinary approaches, quality fieldwork, and provocative outcomes. It should reach students of Balkanology, area studies, folklore, ethnology, sociology, social and cultural anthropology, gender studies, post-graduate and post-doctoral students, researchers, historians, relevant departments at universities and libraries at research institutes. The book will be interesting for Bosnian and Balkan policy makers, all forms of non-institutional education, NGOs, European administration and institutions, and a larger public in the region and beyond.

*Svetlana Slapšak,*

*Director of the Institute for Balkan and  
Mediterranean Studies and Culture, Ljubljana*

# Preface

*"Identities are continuously constructed and secured not only by facing the present and future but also by reconstructing the collectivity's earlier life."*<sup>1</sup>

The publishing world is saturated with books about Bosnia-Herzegovina. An internet search on Amazon using the word Bosnia brings up hundreds. Most were written during or after the war from 1992 to 1995 in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The subjects of the books are genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, ethnicity, human rights, multiculturalism, religion, nationalism, Yugoslavism, Islam, humanitarian intervention, the United Nations, and more. Bosnia-Herzegovina was an empirical site and gripping trope for many political issues the world was facing both consciously and unconsciously and still faces today. Bosnia-Herzegovina was a complex subject with numerous layers of meaning.

This book is not about war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, evil, or sociocide, the killing of a society, a concept I used and developed in three previous books to account for the egregious consequences of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>2</sup> The concept of sociocide is an ideal type, which Max Weber says is necessary to

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander, Jeffrey C. "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma" in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander et al. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 22.

<sup>2</sup> Doubt, Keith. *Sociology after Bosnia and Kosovo: Recovering Justice* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Press, 2000); *Sociologija nakon Bosne* (Sarajevo: Buybook, 2003); and *Understanding Evil: Lessons from Bosnia* (Bronx: Fordham University Press, 2007).

the conduct of any theoretical sociological inquiry.<sup>3</sup> Since the concept of sociocide is an ideal type, it did not actually occur in reality. In other words, there is something invincible about society that makes it impossible to kill. Societies, of course, change. Societies, of course, develop. They regress and evolve. Revolutions destroy one type of society in order to construct a new and, hopefully, better society. Societies themselves, however, have a kind of immortality. This book is about this aspect of Bosnia's society.<sup>4</sup> It is about a cultural heritage that informs marriage and kinship customs in Bosnia-Herzegovina and how these customs represent a distinct cultural identity. This book is about something vital to a society as a society, something that was not killed in the previous war, something that is resilient.<sup>5</sup> The world has read much about the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, its horrible nature and unconscionable character, but the world has read less about Bosnia-Herzegovina itself.

*Through the Window: Kinship and Elopement in Bosnia-Herzegovina* examines the trans-ethnic character of the cultural heritage of Bosnia-Herzegovina, focusing in particular on customs shared by different ethnic groups, specifically elopement, *ukrala se*, and affinal visitation, called *na mir* or *pohode* and other names in different parts of the country.<sup>6</sup> The elopement is a transformative

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<sup>3</sup> Max Weber writes, "It is necessary for the sociologist to formulate pure ideal types of the corresponding forms of action which in each case involve the highest possible degree of logical integration by virtue of their complete adequacy on the level of meaning" (Weber, Max. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1947], 110). According to Weber, sociological explanation does not occur without the use of pure ideal types. Unlike anthropologists, who conduct their investigations without the use of ideal types for the purpose of interpretation and analysis, sociologists, who do follow Weber's recommendation, employ ideal types to provide meaningfully adequate explanations of the social world.

<sup>4</sup> Following everyday usage, the term Bosnia will often be used to refer to the country Bosnia-Herzegovina.

<sup>5</sup> When someone from Bosnia-Herzegovina tells an acquaintance she or he is from Bosnia, the first thing that often comes to the mind of the acquaintance is the war from 1992 to 1995. Bosnia and the war are enmeshed.

<sup>6</sup> Bringa, Tone. *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 119–20. This important source is formative for this book. The very project is inspired by

rite of passage where an unmarried girl, *cura*, becomes a married woman, *žena*. The affinal visitation, which follows, is a confirmatory ceremony where ritualized customs between families establish in-lawships called *prijatelji* [friends].<sup>7</sup> These customs reflect a trans-ethnic heritage shared by people in Bosnia-Herzegovina as a national group, not just one specific ethnic group.

One aim of this study is to examine elopement's significance for the maturation into adulthood of a young girl in light of Erik Erikson's work on identity and anthropological literature on rites of passage. A second aim is to understand how affinal relations called *prijatelji* vis-à-vis agnatic relations called *bratstvo* and fictive relations called *kumstvo*, are unique to Bosnia and important to its national character but politically vulnerable to nationalism. A third aim is to assess the damage inflicted on this cultural heritage during the war from 1992 to 1995 and measure the resilience of this cultural heritage some eighteen years later.

Even if every member of a society were killed, the memory of that society would remain a part of history and humanity's consciousness. For example, the Beothuks, the native inhabitants of Newfoundland in Canada, did not survive the violence of the settling Europeans in their native habitat and the disaster of not only diseases the Europeans brought with them, but also killings conducted by the Europeans. Not one member of the native community survived, but there are stories and folklore that speculate on how just one might have survived, perhaps escaping to the north to Labrador. In Newfoundland, the Beothuks are still present if only in the saying of their name by the inhabitants of the island. The Beothuks live on through their material culture that remains and bears witness to the history of their existence and social life on the island. The Beothuks are known through the stories that are told about them and the books that are written about them. Visitors to Newfoundland, if open to it, feel their spiritual presence on

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and indebted to the ethnographic findings of Tone Bringa as well as William G. Lockwood.

<sup>7</sup> Turner, Victor. "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*." *Symposium of New Approaches to the Study of Religions: Proceedings of the 1964 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society* (1964): 4–20.

the island, a haunting presence, if you will, of the island's native inhabitants.<sup>8</sup>

An invincible sense of interrelatedness and interconnectedness characterizes society. Among human beings there is a resilience based on who they are as human beings. This resilience exemplifies what human beings are as individuals and as members of a community not only empirically but also metaphysically. The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (its social meaning, its political consequences, its moral character, its historical lesson) has been examined and discussed in innumerable books. Who Bosnians are and their collective social character have been less frequently examined and, outside of Bosnia remain relatively obscure.

At this time, the international community and people in Bosnia-Herzegovina do not have much confidence in the viability of a broad Bosnian culture that carries sufficient weight to initiate progressive social change. While the hope for an integrated country exists inside and outside of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the knowledge-base for such a development is fading more and more quickly. Drawing upon a mixture of cultural anthropology and sociology, this book examines the degree to which there not only was but still is a singular, albeit varied, cultural heritage shared by people in Bosnia-Herzegovina from each ethnic group with their distinct ethnic identities. Although the ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina have a distinct ethnic identity, they also have a distinctive collective personality.

The research for this book is a blend of qualitative and quantitative research, a mixed methodology. The qualitative research was conducted in collaboration with *Žene Ženama* [Women to Women], a self-organized women's group with established contacts throughout Bosnia that contributes to the development of civil society through empowerment of women. The quantitative research was conducted with two survey marketing groups based in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina: Mareco Index Bosnia and Prism Research, both with extensive professional experience conducting survey research for universities, embassies, and governmental agencies.

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<sup>8</sup> For a well-researched and balanced account of this historical subject, see Marshall, Ingeborg. *A History and Ethnography of the Beothuk* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996).



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It is a common and perhaps trite statement for someone after completing a project to say I cannot thank everyone who helped with this endeavor. I, though, want at least to try.

Two undergraduate students at Wittenberg University provided me indispensable help. Alexandra Huleatt conducted a tenacious literature search on elopement at the start of the project, and Sarah Boedicker commented wisely on the book manuscript at the end. After giving a presentation on elopements to my faculty, two colleagues made invaluable suggestions. Mary Joe Zembar recommended the works by Erik Erikson on adolescence to me, and Amy Livingstone encouraged me to look at the literature on kinship structures in Medieval Europe. Josephine Wilson gave me encouragement at crucial points of the project. Maureen Fry's editorial expertise was deeply appreciated. While my Sociology Department is relatively small, I have another Slavic scholar in my department, Jerry Pankhurst, with whom I have had numerous conversations on our shared interests. I frequently consulted with Nona Moskowitz on cultural anthropology and Brooke Wagner on statistical analysis.

Jerry Hirsch, a former colleague at Truman State University, brought my attention to some crucial and helpful materials for writing on folklore. Harry Khamis at Wright State University conferred with me regarding the quantitative analysis in the study. For the writing on Turkey, Kaya Sahin at Indiana University, Svetlana Buzov at Ohio State University, and Kimberly Hart at Buffalo State College made helpful suggestions. E. Wayles Brown at Cornell University generously shared his knowledge of language and the region.

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I employed two excellent survey companies in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Prism Research and Mareco Index Bosnia. The directors at both companies, Dino Djipa and Aida Hadžić Begović, gave me excellent advice. Their interest to help and support this endeavor enabled me to overcome some obstacles.

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I am the beneficiary of conversations with William G. Lockwood in Ann Arbor, Michigan and Victor Ayoub in Yellow Springs, Ohio, two cultural anthropologists who helped me tremendously. This book is inspired by the writings of William G. Lockwood and seeks to preserve the importance of his work. I alone, however, am responsible for whatever flaws are in this study.

Although a teaching university, Wittenberg University provided significant research support through the years with travel grants and

a recent sabbatical. In the summer of 2011, I received a Title VIII Grant from the United States State Department to engage in language study at Indiana University where Ariann Stern-Gottschalk was a gracious host.

I have enjoyed the collegiality and friendship of numerous people in Sarajevo, and I fall back on the bromide I mentioned at the start. I will fail to mention everyone, but I will try. Asim Mujkić, Amer Filipović, and Dino Abazović at the Faculty of Political Science; Damir Marić, Djenita Tuce, and Amira Sadiković at the Faculty of Philosophy; Rusmir Mahmutćehajić at International Forum Bosnia; Dragan Golubović at Media Center; Narcisa Puljek-Bubrić at the Bošnjčki Institut; Lelja Somun-Krupalija at Human Rights Center; Lelja Panjeta and Tuba Boz at International University of Sarajevo; Muhamed Sušić, Amela Kurtović, Fra Ivo Marković, and a cohort of sophisticated, gregarious, and passionate young adults: Elmedin Zubović, Alma Pirić, Nadja Berberović, Irma Alicajić, Maja Pašović, Farasha Euker, Dušica Terzin, Elmir Brkanić, Dragana Kaurin, Nadira and Almir Mustafić, and Emina and Kanis Porca, some of whom vainly helped me to acquire a better knowledge of the language. I was hosted kindly and graciously by Damir Hondo and his family at Hotel Hondo during my stays in Sarajevo.

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Families suffer how a writing project turns an author into a stranger, but I am beloved, and my wife, Susan, and two daughters, Danielle and Aprile, never allowed me to become a stranger.



## CHAPTER 1

# The Study of Elopement

*"The death of your daughter would have been a blessing in comparison of this ... throw off your unworthy child from your affection for ever, and leave her to reap the fruits of her own heinous offense."*<sup>1</sup>

*"No society lacks a system of marriage."*<sup>2</sup>

Our analysis begins by examining a heritage of Bosnia-Herzegovina that is reflected in the marriage custom of elopement. Let us, though, stop and ask. Why study elopement? If one believed that social history reflects an evolution of marriage systems with each historical development becoming more civilized and more advanced over time, one might view the study of elopement in a prejudiced way.<sup>3</sup> Also, given the perspective of modernity, elopement might be viewed as anachronistic. Moreover, from the viewpoint of different faith traditions, elopement might be viewed as an irreligious way to establish marriage. Daniel Bates, who did

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<sup>1</sup> Citations from Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice* found in "Jane Austen and a Family Elopement." *Persuasions* 16 (1994): 30–31. Lydia's elopement in *Pride and Prejudice* is cast in a negative frame in that her elopement with George Wickman is framed as amoral vis-à-vis the reserved, uncertain but ultimately successful path to marriage of her sister, Elizabeth. Lydia is Elizabeth's alter ego and the antagonist of the story. In this study, women in Bosnia-Herzegovina who elope are cast in a positive frame and serve as protagonists in the study's narrative.

<sup>2</sup> Merton, Robert K. "Intermarriage and the Social Structure: Fact and Theory." *Psychiatry* 4 (1941): 361.

<sup>3</sup> For an example of this extreme position, see Lubbock, Sir John. *The Origin of Civilization and the Primitive Condition of Man: Mental and Social Condition of Savages* (London: Longmans Green, 1879).

ethnographic research on elopement in Turkey, lamented that elopement is “excised from the approved list of explainable social behavior.”<sup>4</sup>

Elopement is not ruleless. Elopement happens in a social system and reveals important characteristics of that social system. It does not occur randomly. Nor do we need to view elopement in a binary way, that is, as a deviant action vis-à-vis normatively acceptable action. Elopement may be a preferred mode of action, reflecting a set of social values, shared ideology, and collective sentiment, all of which together constitute a significant component of a society. A better understanding of the cultural features of the society may thus arise from the study of elopement.

Scholarship on elopement is currently global and historical. The anthropological studies of elopement are not isolated to one region of the world, nor to one historical epoch. These studies all share an interest in understanding the cultural significance of elopement and how elopement reflects an individual and community identity. To start this inquiry, a few of these studies will be reviewed to identify some key parameters that frame this particular examination of elopement in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Laura Ahearn’s book, *Invitations to Love*, studies the popularity of elopement in Junigau, a community in Nepal, where love letter writing serves as a method of courtship and a way to initiate an elopement. While not a capture marriage, the elopements described to Ahearn suggest some degree of coercion. Several informants reported that, when they eloped, a spell had been cast on them or they had been the victim of magic. It was uncommon, Ahearn observed, for a woman to testify to her own agency in the social act of elopement.<sup>5</sup>

In *Our Women Are Free: Gender and Ethnicity in the Hindu-kush*, Wynne Maggi analyzes the significance of elopement in a small Kalasha community near Chitral, Pakistan. She finds that elopement establishes a special space where human agency is affirmed in a compelling way. The values of freedom and self-respect

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<sup>4</sup> Bates, Daniel G. “Introduction: Kidnapping and Elopement as Alternative Systems of Marriage.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 47 (1974): 234.

<sup>5</sup> Ahearn, Laura. *Invitations to Love: Literacy, Love Letters, and Social Change in Nepal* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 111.

are established and exemplified. Within the community, elopement, moreover, is a representation of an ethnic identity for not only individual women, but also the community. In some instances, elopement in the Kalasha community is a way to leave an unhappy marriage and start anew with a second husband, breaking the restriction of a monogamous marriage.<sup>6</sup>

Kathryn A. Sloan in *Runaway Daughters: Seduction, Elopement, and Honor in Nineteenth-Century Mexico* examines elopement, called *rapto*, as a deviant act vis-à-vis the family's sense of honor.<sup>7</sup> The traditional values of the society emphasize the importance of parental approval and control over how marriage takes place. Elopement transgresses this normative code, making marriage a *fait accompli* without parental approval. Focusing on records from court cases, Sloan shows how parents then take various face-saving measures and strategically surrender their objections to the marriage their daughter sought when traditional values of family honor have been transgressed. The social structure, however, does not actually change. Parents choosing their children's spouse has higher status than children choosing their own marriage partner.

In *Wayward Women: Sexuality and Agency in a New Guinea Society*, Holly Wardlow explains how elopement is one way to escape the entrapment of bridewealth and its economic coercion, which objectifies women as a commodity. The system of bridewealth sustains an oppressive social system. Marriage between families becomes an economic exchange where the value of the bride is measured according to an exchange of sex for money. Elopement then is one of several types of negative agency aimed at transgressing the confines of this cultural practice.<sup>8</sup>

These studies make clear some initial parameters for the study of elopement in Bosnia-Herzegovina. For example, Ahearn observes that for the women she interviewed in Nepal it was difficult to bear

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<sup>6</sup> Maggi, Wynne. *Our Women Are Free: Gender and Ethnicity in the Hindukush*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

<sup>7</sup> Sloan, Kathryn A. *Runaway Daughters: Seduction, Elopement, and Honor in Nineteenth-Century Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> Wardlow, Holly. *Wayward Women: Sexuality and Agency in a New Guinea Society* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006).

witness to their own agency in the social action of elopement. The elopement, they said, occurred independently of their free will.<sup>9</sup> The findings presented in this book in regard to elopements in Bosnia-Herzegovina are different. In the interviews conducted, women in Bosnia-Herzegovina gladly testified to and proudly bore witness to their own agency while narrating their elopements. The elopement became a formative event in their lives. Their free will was emphasized, even idealized and romanticized. In contrast to the women in Nepal, women in Bosnia-Herzegovina articulated a strong sense of social agency when recounting their elopement as an important event in their lives.

During her ethnographic study in the Kalasha community, Maggi observed that often the most dramatic example of elopement was when a married woman eloped with another man to enter a second marriage. Elopement here was a way to end a marriage.<sup>10</sup> For Bosnian women such is neither the purpose nor function of elopement. Like a traditional wedding, elopement is a cultural custom that initiates a marriage, breaking not from one husband to join another but from one's parents and childhood to start an adult life with another. While a marriage established through elopement may end in divorce just as a marriage established through a traditional wedding, elopement itself is not a way to separate from one husband to start a marriage with another.

Sloan finds that in Mexico the normative practice is for parents to maintain the dominant role in choosing their children's marriage partner.<sup>11</sup> While parental control of marriage certainly exists in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the social situation and cultural expectations are generally different. Children have the right to choose whom they will marry. The young girl has the right to make her own choice in regard to marriage. Even with traditional weddings, the couple rather than the family typically initiate the marriage.

In New Guinea, Wardlow accounts for elopement as the practice of negative agency to counter the powerfulness and exploitation of the society's bridewealth system. While in Bosnia-Herzegovina

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<sup>9</sup> Ahearn, *Invitations to Love*, 111.

<sup>10</sup> Maggi, *Our Women Are Free*, 167–212.

<sup>11</sup> Sloan, *Runaway Daughters*, 32–56.



elopements can result in angry and hurt feelings within a family (the daughter's parents feel betrayed and rejected), elopement nevertheless is more often an example of positive rather than negative agency. The elopement is a choice *for* something rather than a choice *against* something. Though not always, elopement is a choice motivated by love. Love becomes an important structural component of the action.<sup>12</sup>

In New Guinea, moreover, elopement breaks the relation between families in that the expected bridewealth is no longer paid. In contrast, in Bosnia, elopement often brings families together to establish the in-lawship, *prijatelji*, even though the families themselves did not initiate the marriage. In New Guinea, elopement breaks the practice of gift-giving between families; in Bosnia, elopement traditionally initiates a series of gift-giving visitations and rituals between families.<sup>13</sup> (These affinal visitations and their significance in Bosnia-Herzegovina will be discussed in the last chapters of this book.)

Just as elopements have been studied in countries outside of Bosnia-Herzegovina, they have been studied in Bosnia-Herzegovina as well. One of the earliest is Anton Hangi's *Život i običaji muslimana u BiH, Sarajevo* [The life and customs of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina], written before 1900. The study contains a vivid account of an elopement narrated to Hangi, a Croatian ethnologist.<sup>14</sup> In a chapter titled "*Ašikovanje*" [Courtship], Hangi reports an elopement as told to him by a member of the bridal party. A Muslim girl from a wealthy family, who lived in one town, eloped to the groom's home in another town, where a wedding ceremony then followed. The account describes the excitement as well as the potential for violence as the elopement took place late at night in the courtyard of the girl's home with the aid of a servant woman. The father's tacit consent is alluded to since he encounters the event as

<sup>12</sup> William J. Goode writes, "Because love often determines the intensity of an attraction toward or away from an intimate relationship with another person, it can become one element in a decision or action" ("The Theoretical Importance of Love." *American Sociological Review* 24 [1959]: 38).

<sup>13</sup> Wardlow, *Wayward Women*, 99–134.

<sup>14</sup> Hangi, Anton. *Život i običaji muslimana u BiH, Sarajevo* [The life and customs of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina] (Sarajevo: Dobra Knjiga, 2009).

it is happening and does not intervene. This account from before 1900 assumes a predominant place in this book on the cultural customs of Muslims in Bosnia, which suggests that elopement has been a long-standing custom.<sup>15</sup>

In a study of marriage conducted just before World War II in what at that time was called the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Vera Stein Erlich observed something distinctive about the marriage customs in Bosnia in comparison to other regions in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Her study, which employs extensive survey data, is worth citing at length. Erlich observed that "In Bosnia ... 'marriage is arranged by the children.'"<sup>16</sup> Erlich then pointed out that "In patriarchal regions [referring to Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia] the bride was chosen almost exclusively and autonomously by the parents of the young man."<sup>17</sup> The situation in Bosnia, however, was different; Erlich found that "The most important point is that the two young people are fond of each other and that they have some means. Everything else is of secondary significance."<sup>18</sup> Erlich also observed that "While he seldom could choose a girl against the will of his parents, as he had to bring her into their home, the girl could oppose her parents more easily and she did so more frequently."<sup>19</sup> In elopement, then, the young woman has more independence than the young man, who must win the consent of his parents for the marriage before bringing the girl he wants to marry to their home. The girl herself exercises a certain independence and exemplifies a sense of autonomy.

Dinko Tomašić discusses elopement as a cultural custom in an essay published in 1945 titled "Personality Development of Dinaric Warriors," an essay which discusses in broad terms the cultural attributes of the Dinaric society found in the mountainous territory of Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegrin. He writes, "In the past, mar-

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<sup>15</sup> For an English translation, see Hangi, Anton. "Courting." *Spirit of Bosnia* 6 (2011). Retrieved on January 6, 2014 at <http://www.spiritofbosnia.org/volume-6-no-4-2011-october/courting-1899>

<sup>16</sup> Erlich, Vera St. *Family in Transition: A Study of 300 Yugoslav Villages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 188.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

riage by capture took place often without the consent of the girl, but nowadays the capture is usually prearranged. A girl may elope with a man when she is threatened in marriage to a man whom she does not like.”<sup>20</sup> The elopement, Tomašić points out, functions as a safety valve in a controlling social structure where the adolescent girl is frustrated by the control of her parents.

This point is dramatically demonstrated in Ivo Andrić’s novel, *Bridge on the Drina*. After her father arranged an unwanted marriage, the beautiful Fata commits suicide on her wedding day by leaping off her bridal horse into the river Drina from the bridge. Fata is an intelligent, beautiful, independent woman whom every young man in Višegrad wants to marry and every young girl wants to be. She is witty and clever in addition to being beautiful. A jingle is created in praise of her. “Thou are wise as thou art lovely, Lovely Fata Avdagina...” Upon meeting a lad from Nezuci, a remote village near Višegrad, she smugly turns down the lad’s advances saying she will marry him “When Velji Lug comes down to Nezuci.” Velji Lug is her village. She taunts her suitor and shows that she is unattainable. Shortly after spurning the lad’s advances (whose name we never learn), her father gives her as a bride in an arranged marriage with the lad’s father. Fata is forced to swallow her pride. She quietly proceeds to prepare her dowry with traditional customs and softly sings while doing so with other women. After the marriage ceremony, the wedding party heads across the bridge toward Nezuci. Velji Lug, we see, will soon come down to Nezuci. While sitting on her horse, Fata asks her escort to pull the horse closer to the *kapia*, a place on the bridge where people often pause to admire the waters below, and stop. With considerable fortitude, she steps onto the ledge and throws herself into the Drina to her death. No foreboding precedes her act. No premonition occurs. Fata’s father ignored his daughter’s right to choose whom to marry, which, from her viewpoint, justified suicide.<sup>21</sup>

After World War II, two cultural anthropologists, William G. Lockwood and Tone Bringa, made observations similar to those of Erlich and Tomašić. In the village he studied in the seventies,

<sup>20</sup> Tomašić, Dinko. “Personality Development of Dinaric Warriors.” *Psychiatry* 8 (1945): 476.

<sup>21</sup> Andrić, Ivo. *Bridge on the Drina* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 111.

Lockwood reported that “by far the majority of marriages, easily ninety percent, are formed by elopement.”<sup>22</sup> Bringa likewise noted that “The most common form of marriage during my stay in the village and I believe over the last thirty years was marriage by elopement.”<sup>23</sup> Although elopement among the poor to avoid wedding costs was certainly common, Lockwood pointed out that in the Bosnian village he studied, members of wealthy households married through elopement as well.<sup>24</sup>

Elopement is different from a bride abduction, called *otmica*, although sometimes studies discuss the two different phenomena interchangeably.<sup>25</sup> A bride abduction occurs when a girl is kidnapped unwillingly into marriage. Coercion and force are used. It is not her free will to marry. The bride abduction is tantamount to rape. A frequently noted discussion of bride abduction is found in the work of Vuk Karadžić. Karadžić writes, “In Serbia, girls were abducted down to our own times. ... Black George put a ban on the abduction of girls. ... When the Turks conquered Serbia in 1813, abduction came back again.”<sup>26</sup> Bride abduction is a frequent theme in Balkan folklore; paintings of traditional times hung on walls in homes and restaurants depict a bride abduction in process where two or three men on horseback are carrying a woman with them. Bride abductions are etched into the cultural memory of the Balkan society. Although elopements are decidedly different from bride abductions, they are also interrelated in that the pathos of a bride abduction may be projected onto an elopement and acted out by the participants and observers.

Unlike bride theft, however, elopement occurs with the complicity of the girl and without her parents’ knowledge or, at least, with-

<sup>22</sup> Lockwood, William G. “Bride Theft and Social Maneuverability in Western Bosnia.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (1974): 260.

<sup>23</sup> Bringa, Tone. *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 123.

<sup>24</sup> Lockwood, “Bride Theft and Social Maneuverability in Western Bosnia,” 263.

<sup>25</sup> Bates, Daniel G. “Normative and Alternative Systems of Marriage Among the Yörük of Southeastern Turkey.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (1974): 270–87; Kudat, Anse. “Institutional Rigidity and Individual Initiative in Marriages of Turkish Peasants.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (1974): 288–303.

<sup>26</sup> Wilson, Duncan. *The Life and Times of Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, 1787–1864* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 377–78.

out their overt knowledge. However, the difference between an elopement, *ukrala se*, and bride abduction, *otmica*, may not always be clear to observers of the event or even the participants themselves. Family members and sometimes police may go to the young man's household as soon as possible after an elopement to ask the girl whether it is her free will to marry. Asking the question of her in person is done to confirm that she made this decision without coercion. Delay risks losing the opportunity to give the girl a chance to say no.<sup>27</sup>

An elopement and a traditional wedding ceremony, called *svadba*, are also, of course, different. A traditional wedding sometimes follows when the parents' permission is given to the daughter to marry or when an arrangement is made between the fathers of the two households. Sometimes, after a girl elopes and arrives at the groom's home and village, there is a quickly arranged wedding ceremony. The two categories, therefore, are not always mutually exclusive.

Lockwood and Bringa suggested that elopement is a Bosnian cultural custom more typical for Bosnian Muslim or Bosniak women, not practiced to the same degree by Orthodox or Catholic women in Bosnia-Herzegovina. They believed that Orthodox and Catholic women married more frequently through traditional weddings.<sup>28</sup> Their assumptions are challenged by the results of two surveys conducted in Bosnia after the recent war. Fall 2013 Mareco Index Bosnia, a survey research group in Sarajevo, included a question on how people in Bosnia married in its omnibus survey. The result was 21.7% of 985 female subjects reported marrying by elopement (see Table 1.1). The percentage for female Croats (19.2%) was close to the percentage for female Bosniaks (22.9%) and female Serbs (22.5%). Spring 2011 Prism Research, another

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<sup>27</sup> "But if the girl says (as is most often the case): 'There was no force, it was my own free will. I would go with him over hill and stream'; then the abductors give something to the magistrate, make their peace with the girl's family, and take her off home to celebrate the wedding" (Duncan, *The Life and Times*, 378).

<sup>28</sup> Bringa notes the following: "Although some Catholics in the village claimed that the procedure of elopement was a peculiar Muslim custom, and that Muslim girls 'just go off like that,' Mirjana's case proves that Catholic girls also elope" (*Being Muslim the Bosnian Way*, 132).

survey research group in Sarajevo, included a similar pilot question on how people married in its omnibus survey. The result was that 22.1% of 574 female subjects from the Bosnian population reported marrying by elopement (see Table 1.2). The percentage was lower for female Croats (10.5%) than both female Bosniaks and female Serbs (27% and 20.3% respectively). The sample for both surveys was collected with cluster sampling, where the total population was divided into clustered groups and a random sample of the groups was taken. These findings indicate that elopement reflects a cultural identity exemplified not only by Bosnian Muslims, but also by Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats.

**Table 1.1. Elopements (*ukrala se*) of females in Bosnia-Herzegovina by nationality**

|                  |            | Nationality |         |       |           |
|------------------|------------|-------------|---------|-------|-----------|
|                  |            | Croat       | Bosniak | Serb  | Row Total |
| <b>Elopement</b> | <b>Yes</b> | 19.2%       | 22.9%   | 22.5% | 21.7%     |

Source: Mareco Index Bosnia, Sarajevo, September 2013. Sample size: females, n=985. Missing: Nationality (Other), n=2.

**Table 1.2. Marriage by elopement (*ukrala se*) of females in Bosnia-Herzegovina by nationality**

|                  |            | Nationality |         |       |           |
|------------------|------------|-------------|---------|-------|-----------|
|                  |            | Croat       | Bosniak | Serb  | Row Total |
| <b>Elopement</b> | <b>Yes</b> | 10.5%       | 27.0%   | 20.3% | 22.1%     |

Source: Prism Research, Bosnia-Herzegovina, April 2011. Sample size: males and females, n=574. Missing: Nationality (Bosnian, Other, and Does not know/Does not wish to answer), n=17.

In the summer of 2011, I conducted interviews in Bosnia-Herzegovina with Bosnian women who married by elopement. The women were Muslim and Orthodox residing in Republika Srpska. The interviews were arranged by *Žene Ženama* [Women to Women] who found subjects who had eloped and willingly agreed to be interviewed. The subjects were a voluntary sample, and their selection was purposive. The interviews were semi-structured with

a set of open-ended questions piloted during previous interviews with Bosnians in Saint Louis, Missouri. The questions were provided to an interviewer, a young woman with family from the region attending graduate school in Sarajevo, contracted by *Žene Ženama*. The subjects identified with the younger woman from their region and openly shared their stories as if giving advice to a young, unmarried woman. I was present during the interviews, talked causally with the interviewees in Bosnian, and observed the nonverbal communications of the group. After the interviews, the translator listened to the audio recording and recorded an oral translation of the interview into English, providing additional comments to explain particular words and phrases. I transcribed the translation while listening to the audio recording in translation and then in Bosnian.

Previously, I had conducted in-depth interviews with Bosniaks living in Saint Louis, Missouri. I met the subjects, who settled in this city after the war, through a young man who was trusted within the fairly closed Bosnian community residing in Saint Louis. The respect my subjects had for my contact person as well as the contact person's recommendation of me to them were critical to carrying out the study. With the help of my contact person, I selected four case studies from a different region representing four geographic corners of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The first interviewee was from a village in southwest Bosnia-Herzegovina near Mostar, the second from a village in southeast Bosnia-Herzegovina near Goražde, the third from a village in northwest Bosnia-Herzegovina near Bihać, and the fourth from a village in northeast Bosnia-Herzegovina near Brčko. The goal was to explore the generalizability of Lockwood and Bringa's studies in central Bosnia-Herzegovina. I treated each case as a paradigmatic case, focusing through careful questioning on the descriptions and accounts of the subjects regarding not only their marriages, but also their parents' and siblings' marriages.

In 2013, I visited Turkey twice while my daughter was teaching English there. During these visits, I traveled to Bursa and Pendik where there is a significant Bosniak population. I talked with people in cafés and the Bosniak civic centers about whether and to what degree they maintained kinship structures from the Balkans. The

findings from this exploratory research are included in this study and looked at comparatively.

This book draws attention to a neglected but politically important subject in Balkan ethnology, and it does so from both a sociological and an anthropological perspective. While emphasizing the sociological, this book does not neglect the anthropological perspective. While constructing a theoretical frame, it does not neglect empirical methodology. The approach is a mixed, in terms of both disciplines (anthropology, sociology, psychology, philosophy) and methodology, engaging in qualitative and quantitative data collection. This book does not aim, however, to provide an all-encompassing account of the subject. There are issues discussed that could be more fully explicated. There are paths to be taken that still need to be charted and explored. The hope is that the book raises more questions than it answers, identifies more issues than it resolves, and stimulates readers by either its content or its methodology to investigate these questions and issues further. The book invites scholars, particularly young scholars in Eastern Europe, to undertake further investigation of kinship and social organization in the Balkans so as to explain them more fully and critically.

The following chapter analyzes the findings from the interviews in Bosnia-Herzegovina, drawing first upon Victor W. Turner's work on the liminality inherent in any rite of passage and applying this conceptual frame to the elopement as a rite of passage. Subsequent chapters employ the work of Pierre Bourdieu on *habitus*, Georg Simmel on secrets, and Erik Erikson on ego-identity to examine the social character of elopement as an oriented course of action. Elopements are then considered in the context of family folklore, after which the book turns to an examination of the in-lawship, *prijatelji* [friends], the affinal relation established after marriage.



## CHAPTER 2

# The Liminality of Elopement

*"It is not a mere acquisition of knowledge, but a change in being."*<sup>1</sup>

Before an elopement, the girl's position is stable. Her role is ascribed by her family, community, and upbringing. An elopement results in a change in the girl's position. In a short period, she moves from being an unmarried girl, *cura*, to a married woman, *žena*. The elopement is a state of becoming.<sup>2</sup> As Victor W. Turner would say, the elopement is "at once de-structured and restructured."<sup>3</sup> The girl is no longer *cura*. Nor is she yet *žena*. This liminal space is undefined as when water boils from liquid to gas. During this period, there seem to be little community support and few social rights. During the elopement, the girl is in no-man's land. Once

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<sup>1</sup> Turner, Victor. "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*." *Symposium of New Approaches to the Study of Religions: Proceedings of the 1964 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society* (1964): 11. An earlier version of this chapter was published as "Eloppements of Bosnian Women" in *The Anthropology of East Europe Review*, vol. 30, no. 2 (2012).

<sup>2</sup> When the woman marries, it is called *uda se* [gives herself away]. When the man marries, it is called *oženi se* [gets/takes himself a woman/wife]. Traditionally, the girl moves into the boy's home with his parents. Marriages traditionally are patrilocal. When a young man moves into the wife's home, it is called *udao se*, using the verb for a woman marrying in the masculine form. The term is a disparaging one. Uxorilocal marriages, where the married couple moves into the home of the wife's household, are infrequent. See Bringa, Tone. *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 119–20.

<sup>3</sup> Turner, "Betwixt and Between," 7.

in her husband's home, the girl will again have a stable status as her husband's wife, living with her husband's family (which was the traditional custom in rural communities) and being subject to her mother-in-law in her new home.<sup>4</sup>

Turner invites anthropologists "to focus their attention on the phenomena and processes of mid-transition."<sup>5</sup> He theorizes that they "paradoxically expose the basic building blocks of culture just when we pass out of and before we re-enter the structural realm."<sup>6</sup> The difficulty of accepting Turner's invitation is that these phenomena are also the least observable. One is not meant to know when or how an elopement occurs. It is a secret except to the couple eloping and perhaps one or two go-betweens.<sup>7</sup> At best, there may be a suspicion within the family and among neighbors. There may even be a hidden complicity. Notice that an ethnographer could not participate in an elopement as a participant observer. Still, as noted in the previous chapter, there is one ethnographic account narrated recounted by a member of a bridal party to a Croatian ethnologist, Anton Hangi, published before 1900.<sup>8</sup>

The following discussion is taken from different accounts of elopement from in-depth interviews in Bosnia-Herzegovina with Bosnian women who married by elopement. The women were Muslim and Serbian Orthodox. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the interviews were arranged by Žena Ženama [Women to Women], who found subjects who had eloped and agreed to be interviewed.

The first story is told by a subject approximately eighty years old. The location of her home is not disclosed to protect her ano-

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<sup>4</sup> Yvonne Lockwood recorded witty Bosnian folk songs sung by village girls about mean mothers-in-law and how to be mean in return. See Lockwood, Yvonne. *Text and Context: Folksong in a Bosnian Muslim Village* (Columbus: Slavica, 1983).

<sup>5</sup> Turner, "Betwixt and Between," 19.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> See Georg Simmel's work on the functional role of the secret within interpersonal relations and various social structures such as secret societies. The subject will be developed in a later chapter. Simmel, Georg. *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1950), 307–75.

<sup>8</sup> Hangi, Anton. "Courting." *Spirit of Bosnia* 6 (2011). Retrieved on January 6, 2014 at <http://www.spiritofbosnia.org/volume-6-no-4-2011-october/courting-1899>

nymity and confidentiality. At the age of fifteen, the subject wanted a life with her boyfriend. Her mother, though, would not allow her to marry. They were poor, and she was the oldest daughter. Her father had passed away, and she was needed at home. She, though, continued to see her boyfriend secretly, never touching, given the courting customs of their traditional time. When her mother heard about these meetings, she forbade her daughter from speaking about him again.

When the subject was twenty, she met with her cousin who was married to a girl in another village. He recommended someone to her from his village. The cousin then arranged a meeting, and the boy and the subject talked over coffee for fifteen minutes. He asked her if she wanted to marry him, and she said yes. Her reasoning was that she was twenty years old, and nobody would now want to marry her at her age. The expectation in the village at that time was that she should be married by this age. They arranged the elopement in three days, and at midnight, three cousins and an aunt came for her. They took her to another village far from her own, walking through forests. Her mother did not know where she was and looked for her for two days. Eventually, her cousin, who acted as a go-between, *provodadžija*, told her mother that she had eloped. This role of the go-between that involve impression management is discussed in Erving Goffman's dramaturgical account of discrepant roles.<sup>9</sup>

When the subject came to her husband's village, they had a wedding ceremony prepared with many village guests. When she approached her husband's home, they put her on a horse which was big and beautiful. She had never ridden a horse before. Here an elopement leads to a traditional wedding. In Hangi's narration, there is a similar transition. The two different rites of passage into a marriage, the elopement and the traditional wedding, while distinct, are not mutually exclusive. The elopement is what Turner calls a

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<sup>9</sup> Using Simmel's work as a base, Erving Goffman accounts for various social roles (the informer, the circus shill, the wiseguy, the shopper, and the go-between) based on the motive with which the social member keeps various types of secrets (dark, inside, strategic, entrusted, and free). Goffman, Erving. "Discrepant Roles" in *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1959), 141–67.

transformative rite of passage. The wedding ceremony that follows is a confirmatory rite of passage.<sup>10</sup>

Fourteen days after the wedding ceremony, the couple had a civil and religious ceremony, both at the same time. There are different rites of passage here with which to confirm a marriage, and from the stories collected during the study, subjects indicated they could occur singularly or in combination with each other, depending upon circumstances and social conditions. This subject eloped, had a traditional wedding, and then later had a civil ceremony and Muslim religious ceremony. We asked about the religious ceremony, and the subject had trouble remembering it.

She recalled that at the wedding ceremony there were many guests. There were several cousins of the groom, and for a while she was not sure who her husband was. She got confused given their brief acquaintance. While she was telling this part of her story, the other women present, relatives and friends, laughed merrily and the woman said, "Please, don't laugh, this is not so funny." In the liminal period, as Turner says, "there is a certain freedom to juggle with the factors of existence."<sup>11</sup> The subject's inability to discern other boys from the one she was marrying reflects not just an observational limit, but an existential uncertainty about who he actually is, not only in terms of character but also physical appearance.

When she arrived at her husband's house, she had nothing to wear. In most elopement stories recounted, clothes were a feature. Lacking clothes suggests a certain vulnerability on the part of the subject during the elopement when it seems she is more in the state of nature than in the structure of a society. After her mother learned of her daughter's elopement, she sent her clothes and things to her new home.

The second story is from a younger woman, approximately thirty years old. She was seventeen when she eloped. In high school she had been a good student, receiving high marks. Her husband and she were young. They were out walking, and he just asked her, "Do you want to get married?" She said, "Yes," and asked "When?" He said, "Now." They were speaking on Monday, and they married

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<sup>10</sup> Turner, "Betwixt and Between," 4.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 15.

on Wednesday. She knew that her parents would not allow her to marry. Her boyfriend's family knew of the elopement, and prepared a wedding ceremony. (Notice, as suggested by Vera Stein Erlich's study, that the boy has somewhat less autonomy in the marriage decision than the girl. He needs tacit approval of his choice from his parents since his wife will live in his family home.)

Her boyfriend came in a car, she went out, and they went to his uncle's wife. There she changed her clothes and put on new ones, which she still keeps to this day for memory's sake. She sadly regrets having lost her shoes from that day. Her brother was swimming in the river and saw the event unfold. (This elopement occurred during the recent war in an eastern Bosnian town.) Her brother then went to her parents and said, "It looks as if your daughter got married." Her father was angry and cried. Her mother "went nuts;" her hands shook so much that she could not pour juice. During the wedding ceremony at her husband's home, they gave her a Koran as she entered the home, the wife of her husband's brother took off her shoes, and they gave her a cup of salt, wheat, and candy to throw, and the wheat went into her husband's ear. They now laugh about this when they recall their marriage. They did not have a religious ceremony. Two years later, though, when she was pregnant, they had a civil ceremony. The municipal clerks assumed that she was getting married because she was pregnant, which her husband and she both found amusing.

She recollected that now that she had children she understood why her parents thought she was too young to marry and recalled how her friends remained in school and went out. The subject, though, was happy as she recollected her elopement and her life and was proud she married this way. Her husband and she together made their marriage. They did it, as it were, their way. She, though, said that she still feels a little sad when she remembers the time she first visited her parent's house after their marriage and her father refused to shake her hand. Elopement defies patriarchal authority and parental control over the daughter's decision of whom and when to marry.

A crucial feature of elopement is that the girl chooses to elope. It represents her free will. While circumstances and social conditions, often quite difficult, constrain and define the event, it is still a

choice, a decision made autonomously. The choice makes the elopement more than a behavior; the choice makes the elopement an action. While the elopement remains a behavior governed by external circumstances and social structures, for example, having grown past the prescribed “marriageable” age, it is also an action, where the action takes into account external circumstances and social conditions in relation to one’s motivation. There is a choice that is made.<sup>12</sup>

The first two accounts are from Muslim women; the next ones are from Orthodox women. Following the recommendation of the director at Žena Ženama, Nuna Zvizdić, who said that Bosnian women from each ethnic group, including not only Bosniaks, but also Croats, Serbs, and Roma, elope to form a marriage, interviews with Orthodox women took place. It is unproductive, Fredrik Barth argues, to study ethnic groups in isolation, as pe-lagic islands. It is better to investigate the ethnic group within a larger society rather than in terms of its singular intrinsic values.<sup>13</sup> This advice is particularly applicable when studying a multi-ethnic society like Bosnia.

The first Orthodox woman shared the story of her mother’s elopement. Her mother was born in 1914. Her father had been employed in the city and passed her mother’s home daily while she was in the garden. Her father and mother would see and greet each other. When he was coming back one day from his job, they met. Her mother’s mother, the subject’s grandmother, found out and did not permit her daughter to see him anymore. Her mother had other boyfriends, but she favored and liked this man. One day he was passing in his car, and he asked if she wanted to go with him. They had not made any agreement or arrangement beforehand. Her mother said yes, and he just took her. This event, according to the subject, is a true example of *ukrala se*. While her mother had known her father, she did not know what day they would elope or

<sup>12</sup> Parsons, Talcott. *The Structure of Social Action: A Study in Social Theory with Special Reference to a Group of Recent European Writers* (New York: Free Press, 1968).

<sup>13</sup> Barth, Fredrik. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 9–38.

even if they would elope. She left from her garden with nothing. The decision to elope was made in a blink.

The interviewee's grandmother was wealthy, owning and running a *han*, a guest home for travelers, mentioned and described in Andrić's *Bridge on the Drina*. Her grandmother was very angry that her daughter left the city to make a life in the mountains. Half a year after her elopement, her mother's sister came to her mother's new home with some clothes. Her father's mother, however, told her mother's sister that they did not need to bring anything. Her father's mother was very happy to have a daughter-in-law. When her father went to work and passed by his wife's former home, he left news about her mother with her mother's sister. Her father was seized by during World War II and taken to the infamous concentration camp, Jasenovac, where he was killed. At the age of twenty-eight, her mother became a widow. Her mother, though, never remarried. Marrying by elopement satisfied her deeply such that she wanted no other. Her mother had a hard but good life, raising five children well. Another subject, who lost her husband with whom she had eloped in the recent war, indicated that this marriage was such that she could neither wish for nor imagine another. The subject was in her late forties.

The next subject who was older than the other subjects when she eloped said that when she eloped, she had a good job and was helping support her family. Her family knew she had a relationship, but expected her to keep working to support the family. Her boyfriend and she kept their intentions secret. Without her parents' knowledge, they planned a honeymoon to Dubrovnik and a civil ceremony. One day she packed a bag, and that night walked out without her shoes so that nobody would hear her. This action was different from just starting to live together, which involves no real rite of passage into a marriage. The subject reflected that during the socialist period of her country, wedding ceremonies were viewed as a kind of kitsch, an event displaying what Thorstein Veblen calls "conspicuous consumption," spending considerable money as a sign of wealth and prestige for others to see displayed.<sup>14</sup> After the

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<sup>14</sup> Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Macmillan, 1912).

recent war, wedding ceremonies are becoming more common, and the subject lamented the changing times. She recommended a book of stories on some of these customs titled *Nasa snaha i mi momci* by the author Ćamil Sijarić.

This chapter will conclude with one more story, even though there are others just as distinctive. The last subject was fifteen when she married. She was a strong high school student and came from a wealthy family. Her husband, from another region, was visiting for his work in her town. He was a policeman and seven years older than her. Her friends and she were very hospitable to him, and they invited him to caf  s and showed him around the town since he was a guest and new to the town. While she had a boyfriend, she started to ask herself whether this new person meant something to her. She was young and did not really know. One day he picked her up and said he would like to marry her that night. He was so confident, she remembered with admiration, and this decision was such a big risk for him because of his career with the police. She was underage, and their marriage might harm his career. She agreed to marry him. She colluded with her neighbor, who acted as a go-between and who had also eloped, to keep her things. Her neighbour said, "This is not right, but I will support you." One hour after midnight, they eloped while her parents slept. Her husband and she went to Dubrovnik for a honeymoon that lasted seven days, and her neighbor told her parents. After two days, she called her mother. Her mother was very sad, thinking she could resolve the situation with a conversation, hoping to undo what had happened. After the honeymoon, they went to her husband's family's village, close to Montenegro. His parents, who had three sons, were happy to get a daughter-in-law. Her husband's parents lived in a mixed village of Orthodox and Muslim Bosnians. All the neighbours gathered to see the bride, but when they came, they asked where the bride was. She was so youthful and full of energy she, in fact, was playing soccer on the field with other children. The Orthodox guests brought money as wedding gifts, and the Muslim guests gave jewellery and rings. One Muslim lady, who had no daughter, gave her mother's family ring to her, an Orthodox girl marrying into a neighbor's family.

Since she was so young, her husband's family excused her from standing, sitting, and serving guests. Still, she took coffee and sugar



to the women neighbors as gifts and cigarettes to the men. She also gave gifts to everyone in the family: sheets, shirts, socks, and fabric to make clothes. Later, her husband's family visited her own family. Before she could attain the required papers for a civil ceremony, she had to go to the center of social work and be interviewed by two different doctors to certify that she was of sound mind and body. She also had to go to the police station and be interviewed to confirm that she entered the marriage willingly.

The subject returned to school. She felt lucky because her husband was not so patriarchal or possessive. She even went to her school prom. Their decision changed her life. She said that the family prepared her to make this kind of decision; without a good upbringing she would not have had the courage to elope. Each elopement, she said, is special in its own way. Her case shows that elopements empower women, elopement being magical and giving you a stronger feeling about yourself and your marriage.

Turner writes on the liminal period, "To 'grow' a girl into a woman is to effect an ontological transformation. ... It is not a mere acquisition of knowledge, but a change in being."<sup>15</sup> A special knowledge about self and gender arises out of the liminal period of this rite of passage called elopement, or *ukrala se*. The special knowledge empowers a young woman with confidence as she transitions to adulthood. At the end of the interview, the subject mentioned that the brightest girl in her class, a student who in the socialist period carried flowers during a national ceremony to Tito, a national scholastic honour, married by elopement. In the following chapter, another striking account of an elopement will be shared and in the chapter after that analyzed in view of Pierre Bourdieu's theorizing on the concept of *habitus*.

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<sup>15</sup> Turner, "Betwixt and Between," 11.



## CHAPTER 3

# An Extraordinary Elopement

*"To a [woman] not led astray from [herself] by sentiments stemming from the surfaces of what [she] sees, but courageously responding to the dynamics of [her] own nature—to a [woman] who is, as Nietzsche phrases it, 'a wheel rolling of itself'—difficulties melt and the unpredictable highway opens as [she] goes."*<sup>1</sup>

The following story comes from an interview arranged by Žene Ženama [Women to Women], which took place in rural Bosnia near the river Drina. While family, children, and grandchildren sat in the living room, an elder woman recounted her elopement. She started by saying that when she was fourteen, she begged her parents to allow her to go to a festival called *teferić*. She was a pretty girl with three long braids coming down to her feet. People would say they could not look at her because she was so pretty.

At first, her mother refused her request, but her daughter persisted. She promised her mother that she would do anything her mother wanted if she could go to the festival. Her mother acquiesced. The subject had never been to this village where the festival was held. Her husband to be, whom she had not seen before, saw her at the festival and started to flirt with her. He was twelve years older. She did not actually pay much attention to him because younger boys, closer to her age, were equally interested in her.

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<sup>1</sup> Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1949), 345. In this quotation, which is addressing the hero's rite of passage through a masculine lens, the gender of the sentence is transposed to female, giving it a feminine lens. See Lincoln, Bruce. *Emerging from the Chrysalis: Rituals in Women's Initiation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

During the festival, she felt sick. The day was hot and the festival was crowded. She felt she might throw up and so went to her cousin's house to lie down. Her future husband came to the house and called out, "Please get up and come to the window to talk with me." She answered, "No, I do not want to," but he insisted and said "I will make a scene if you do not get up and talk with me." She complied with his demand. They talked together but only for a few sentences.

After the festival, there was another kind of gathering called *si-jelo*, where young people sit, talk, and dance in *kolo*, a circle dance. The young people were singing traditional songs and having a good time. Her suitor called out to her, "You can sing till ten, but after ten you will not sing." Her cousin, who lived in the village, was frightened for her; she heard that they were planning to abduct her. Her cousin was so worried that she even ignored her younger sister and stayed with the interviewee.

The Muslim tradition was that an unmarried girl should not be touched. If she is, it is a shame. At that time in this rural area, if a boy pulled a girl out of *kolo*, that is, if he touched her, she then must marry him. The subject said that at the age of fourteen she was so young she did not really know what marriage meant.

The subject had been dancing for some time when boys came up and grabbed her. They pulled her out of the *kolo*. She, however, was so strong that she pulled several other people with her into the cornfield. There was a scene and a sense of panic. The situation was chaotic. The police then came to establish order at the gathering and asked her whether it was her free will to marry, that is, whether she consented to marry, and she said no. The police then said, if it is your free will, you can marry him. If it is not your free will, you can stay and dance. The police promised that they would not let him touch her again.

At this point, the subject heard her suitor's mother, standing near her home, calling out, "I do not want her." The suitor's mother did not want her son to bring a bride, who was a stranger, into her home. Her son had not yet served in the army, and military service lasted two years. When her son would be serving in the army, the young girl would remain in her home while he was away.

A policeman, who knew her father, then confided to her, "I know his family and he is a hard worker and a good man. It would

be OK if you decided to marry. If you want, you could.” This man, a policeman as well as an acquaintance of her father, assumed the role of go-between.<sup>2</sup> He shared knowledge in confidence which appeared to aid and support the subject in making a decision. Moreover, since his knowledge was shared in confidence, it seemed to have greater weight and social value. In most elopement stories, there is someone, a sister, a neighbour, or a friend, who plays the role of go-between and aids the elopement.

Since everyone at the gathering saw how she was pulled from the *kolo*, the subject worried that news would get back to her parents. If someone pulls you out of the *kolo*, it is an enormous shame. She worried that she could not now go back to her parents after what had happened. At this point, she decided to marry. She decided that she wanted to see what marriage was and what it would be like. She did not know whether she liked her suitor, but getting married seemed fun and exciting. After sharing this during the interview, the elder woman laughed merrily with the other women in the room.

After leaving the gathering in the evening, she entered her husband’s home, but nobody was there. She stood in *budžak*, meaning corner, a custom the bride follows upon entering the groom’s home standing with her hands on her hips wearing a red scarf, *duvak*, while family and neighbors visit. At the age of fourteen, she followed the traditional marriage custom in the region and showed the socialization of her culture.

His family, though, had vacated the home because they did not want to receive her. Moreover, nobody came to the house to visit because the family opposed the marriage. In fact, she did not have a scarf. Her scarf was left on the field after her husband had pulled it off. The husband’s brother was living upstairs, and eventually the husband’s brother’s wife came downstairs and gave her a scarf. Since his parents were not there and did not come, her husband said to her, “This is stupid. Don’t do this anymore. It makes no sense.” She spent the night with him. The next day, the brother’s wife brought them some milk, because they had nothing to eat. She

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<sup>2</sup> Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1959), 141–166.

stayed three nights. On the fourth day, her mother and aunt came to the village to take her back to her parent's home. They stood outside and asked her to return with them, but she refused. She had already spent three nights with her husband. If she returned, she would have returned in shame. Her girlfriends would have said that she is now a woman and no longer a young girl. She had crossed from one state of being, *cura*, to another, *žena*, the journey being not just dramatic, but transformative. Recall what Turner said on the liminal period, "To 'grow' a girl into a woman is to effect an ontological transformation... It is not a mere acquisition of knowledge, but a change in being."<sup>3</sup> She simply could not return.

At the end of the interview, the subject reminisced. She recalled that before going to the festival, *teferič*, she had had a boyfriend and was falling in love with him. They had promised each other they would be with nobody else. This boyfriend was an orphan and lived in an orphanage. His family had died in World War II, and he lived on the other side of the Drina. During the night, he would swim to her side of the river with his clothes on his head to keep them dry. He then would come to her house under her window so that they could talk. If he found a ladder, he would climb up and they could see each other. They would talk until four in the morning. This is the cultural custom, *ašikovati*, where a boy courts a girl below a window in the girl's house.<sup>4</sup> He came often and was very brave to swim the river. While she had fallen in love with him, she did not think that her parents would have allowed her to marry him. She was too young at the time, and he was a poor orphan. Although the subject was not able to marry the one she loved, her parents at the same time were not able to choose her marriage partner.

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<sup>3</sup> Turner, Victor. "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*." *Symposium on New Approaches to the Study of Religions: Proceedings of the 1964 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), 11.

<sup>4</sup> In an interview near Sarajevo, an elder woman familiar with these customs told the interesting story of how several boys might come under a girl's window to court her in the evening. She, then, would pick the one from among the group with whom she wished to speak and tell the rest to leave. If the boys would fight over who was allowed to stay, she would tell them all to leave and none would court her.

The subject had ten sons, giving birth to the first at the age of fifteen. She now has thirty grandchildren. Every time she had a child, her husband wanted a daughter, but she always had a son. She laughed merrily as she recounted this. After her first child, her husband went into the army and she went to live in her parents' home because it would have been difficult to stay with her husband's family. The difficulty was not so much with her mother-in-law but with her husband's brother's wife. Being so young, she did not understand the domestic politics in terms of knowing one's place in the hierarchy of the household. Her father accepted her back and had her age changed on her birth certificate so that she would be legally married, which would give respectability to the situation while her child and she stayed with her parents and her husband served in the army. Her husband served eighteen months rather than two years since he was newly married and had a child. Her father continued to ask her to return home even after they had had five children, showing that he had difficulty accepting her marriage and was sad for a long time. In the following chapter, we will discuss this account in view of the concept of *habitus* as theorized in the work of Pierre Bourdieu. To conclude, we cite again the epigram with which the chapter began: "To a [woman] not led astray from [herself] by sentiments stemming from the surfaces of what [she] sees, but courageously responding to the dynamics of [her] own nature—to a [woman] who is, as Nietzsche phrases it, 'a wheel rolling of itself'—difficulties melt and the unpredictable highway opens as [she] goes."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 345.





## CHAPTER 4

# *Habitus* in Bosnia

*"A system of choices which no one makes..."*<sup>1</sup>

The concept of *habitus* as theorized in the work of Pierre Bourdieu provides a lens through which to view the elopement of the elder Bosnian woman in the previous chapter. Bourdieu's account of *habitus* is paradoxical. He writes that *habitus* is "a tendency to generate regulated behaviors apart from any reference to rules."<sup>2</sup> *Habitus*, like elopement, resides in a liminal space between behavior, regulated behavior, and action, autonomous social action.

How does *habitus* regulate behavior independently of rules? Bourdieu calls *habitus* "a whole system of predispositions inculcated by the material circumstances of life and by family upbringing."<sup>3</sup> *Habitus* thus provides the subject with a system of schemes rather than rules guiding her choices. Unlike rules, this system of schemes exists "without ever becoming completely and systematically explicit."<sup>4</sup> While patriarchal structures and machismo are features of her life-world, her relation to them is not one of obedience to fixed rules. The rules, in fact, break down, which does not result

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<sup>1</sup> Pierre Bourdieu cited in Foster, Stephen W. "Reading Pierre Bourdieu." *Cultural Anthropology* 1, no. 1 (1986): 105.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre. "Marriage Strategies as Strategies of Social Reproduction" in *Family and Society: Selections from the Annales Economies, Societies, Civilizations*, eds. Robert Forster and Orest Ranum (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 118.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 119.

in the subject falling into a void. It would be a mistake, as Bourdieu would argue, to cast the subject as a “structural victim.”<sup>5</sup>

The interviewee noted that, when she was fourteen, people said they could not look at her because she was so beautiful. Her symbolic capital, Bourdieu would say here, was this beauty. Moreover, the value of her social capital accrued outside the privacy of her family. As she entered a public sphere, a specific field, and became, perhaps prematurely, a participant at the festival, *teferič*, she gained power and access to social networks.

Notice that the subject bargained successfully with her mother, promising to do whatever her mother wanted if she could go to the festival. The subject knew how to bend the rules of the social structure. As Bourdieu argues, the rule itself is less interesting than the practice that bends the rule.<sup>6</sup> The subject’s mastery of what Bourdieu calls the game of life is a matter of second nature rather than instrumental calculation. Her passion is to attend the festival, *teferič*. Her motives are more unconscious than conscious, and Bourdieu would question whether the conduct should be said to be motive-guided.

To endow an actor’s conduct with motives, Bourdieu argues, is to project an idealistic character onto the conduct. Bourdieu advises against inducing the significance of human conduct from an observer’s construction of a hypothetical, ideally rational course of action.<sup>7</sup> Bourdieu, instead, advises understanding human conduct as embedded reflexively in the social conditions and material circumstances in which the conduct is generated, which gives *habitus* a

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>6</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 52–65.

<sup>7</sup> To heighten the contrast between Pierre Bourdieu and Max Weber, consider the following recommendation on the use of ideal types in social inquiry from Weber’s methodological writing: “In *all* cases, rational and irrational, sociological analysis both abstracts from reality and at the same time helps us to understand it... it is necessary for the sociologist to formulate pure ideal types at the corresponding forms of action which in each case involve the highest possible degree of logical integration by virtue of their complete adequacy on the level of meaning... Theoretical analysis in the field of sociology is possible only in terms of such pure types” (Weber, Max. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1947], 110).

certain tautological character. With *habitus*, human conduct reflects what is reflected.

The suitor, we see, also knows the game of life. He bullies her and intimidates her in machismo ways. As Bourdieu says, male violence is symbolic violence. What the suitor and the interviewee have in common, what appears to attract them to each other in an instinctive way, are their skills at the game of life, which are flaunted in this public sphere.

Is this marriage a bride abduction, *otmica*, or an elopement, *ukrala se*? In this event, the phenomena are not mutually exclusive. A young man steals a young girl into marriage. She is pulled out of the *kolo*. With bravado and machismo, he abducts her in collusion with friends. At the same time, the girl has opportunities to escape this coercion, first, when the police intervene, establish order, and promise they will not allow him to touch her again, and second, when her aunt and mother come to bring her home after spending three nights in her husband's family's home. Ignoring the overt hostility of her mother-in-law and her mother-in-law's public protest, the subject made a decision, a decision that makes her conduct more than behavior, but still less than action. Is the young girl's decision to marry, then, a forced choice or a matter of consent? Bourdieu would say neither:

The effect of symbolic domination... is exerted not in the pure logic of knowing consciousnesses but through the schemes of perception, appreciation, and action that are constitutive of *habitus* and which, below the level of decisions of consciousness and the controls of will, set up a cognitive relationship that is profoundly obscure to itself.<sup>8</sup>

It is not any control of will that caused the interviewee to decide to marry. It is a scheme of "perception, appreciation, and action," a scheme that establishes a cognitive relation but that is obscure to the subject herself. The subject is reflexively but not self-reflexively embedded in the scheme.

There are, though, still rules in this field of interaction. The rules are part of the setting. The rules, however, are external to the char-

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<sup>8</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 37.

acter of the conduct itself. While there is the Muslim custom that if a girl is not to be touched and, if she is, she is expected to marry, the police do not view the traditional custom as enforceable. They rescind the custom. There is also another rule, a rule against bride theft or *otmica*. The police do their job, intervene, and ask the subject whether it is her free will to marry. Asking after her free will is asking theoretically whether she embodies the practice self-reflectively. She is given the opportunity to opt out of this trap. At first, she answers no, "It is not my free will." Then, upon reflection, she changes her mind and says yes.

*Habitus* guides her decision, not behavior compliance, nor rational self-reflection. *Habitus* is not a matter of compliance to an external constraint or socialization. The subject is not following some fixed rule. The police give her an out. She has a loophole from which to escape the snare of the situation. The police promise that her suitor will not touch her again and she can return to the *kolo*. At the same time, one policeman gives her a reason to be confident if she decides to marry. An acquaintance of her father who is an adult vouches for the good standing of her suitor, whom she had never met before. She trusts the goodwill of the policeman, a trust that even overrides how her mother-in-law proclaims that she is not welcome in her son's home, which is an intimidating variable in this field of interaction. Bourdieu provides an apt metaphor. The subject is like a train laying her own tracks. There is no set of rails in front of her. She must lay her own tracks as her wheels move forward.<sup>9</sup>

Did, then, the subject intend to marry? Bourdieu would say no. Bourdieu writes: "The *habitus* contains the solution to the paradoxes of objective meaning without subjective intention. It is the source of these strings of 'moves' which are objectively organized as strategies without being the product of a genuine strategic intention."<sup>10</sup> To say that she intends to marry frames her conduct in an ideally rational account following some hypothetical ideal type constructed by the observer of her conduct, employing what Weber would call an ideal type in order to understand her conduct as an

<sup>9</sup> Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 56.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 62.

oriented social action. At the same time, the subject makes a decision, a decision based on a strategy, not a rule, but a decision with an objective meaning. The decision, however, lacks subjective intention, that is, a motive. She thus falls into a void, the landing being both softer and harder than expected.

Unlike compliant behavior, a decision is made, and the decision rather than the rule or the custom accounts for the conduct. At the same time, her conduct is not action, that is, an oriented social action. She did not intend to marry knowing what marriage really was. She said that marriage seemed exciting and fun. She made a decision, which distinguishes her conduct from behavioral compliance, but she did not make a choice, which distinguishes her conduct from rational action. If she could have chosen, she would have chosen the boyfriend she loved who swam the Drina to see her. This paradox is crucial to understanding the liminal character of *habitus*. "The *habitus* is a spontaneity without consciousness or will, opposed as much to the mechanical necessity of things without history in mechanistic theories as it is to the reflexive freedom of subjects 'without inertia' in rationalist theories." Again, *habitus* resides between behavior, which follows "the mechanical necessity of things without history," and social action, which glorifies "the reflexive freedom of subjects 'without inertia' in rationalist theories."<sup>11</sup> *Habitus* does not transcend the paradox between behavior and action; it is suspended in this paradox, and elopement exemplifies this critical feature of *habitus*. Culture, Bourdieu says (again in a paradoxical way), is "a system of choices which no one makes."<sup>12</sup>

It is helpful at this point to distinguish first behavior, then *habitus*, and then action. First, behavior is collectivity conscious but individually unconscious. Behavior follows rules in the social structure. These rules that are acquired through socialization determine the behavior. Second, *habitus*, as formulated by Bourdieu, is collectivity unconscious but individually conscious. The conduct is not conscious of the social rules and thus the conduct is not determined by social structure per se. At the same time, the individual is conscious, that is, strategically engaged with the social structure of

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>12</sup> Bourdieu cited in Foster, "Reading Pierre Bourdieu," 105.

which the individual is unconscious. Social structure and individual consciousness exist side by side, but do not overlap. With *habitus* there is a gap, a state of ignorance between the two. Third, action is collectivity conscious and individually conscious. As a theory of human conduct formulated in the works of Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, and Kenneth Burke, action is simultaneously subjective and objective.<sup>13</sup> The social actor does not just decide but chooses ends and selects means to achieve these ends within the determining social context and material circumstances while being guided by a particular normative orientation. Bourdieu's work debunks this notion of social action in modern social science as a viable account of human conduct. For Bourdieu, it is grounded in a false and, given his positivism, delusional sense of subjectivity.

Recall how the young girl entered her new home and stood in the corner, *budžak*. Such was the village custom the bride followed upon entering the groom's home, standing with her hands on her hips wearing a red scarf while family and neighbors visit. The girl used the custom strategically.

Marriage was not based on obedience to any ideal rule but came about as the end result of a *strategy* which, availing itself of strongly interiorized principles of a particular tradition, was able to reproduce in a manner more subconscious than conscious any one of the typical solutions explicitly contained in that tradition.<sup>14</sup>

The subject availed herself of strongly interiorized principles of her marriage customs, reproducing them in a manner more subconscious than conscious as an effective solution for her social practice embedded within that cultural tradition. She assumes not a social position ascribed by a particular social role as a self-conscious social actor but rather a disposition, a *habitus*, employed both unconsciously and playfully in the social interaction she lives.

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<sup>13</sup> Weber, Max. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947); Parsons, Talcott. *The Structure of Social Action: A Study in Social Theory with Special Reference to a Group of Recent European Writers* (New York: Free Press, 1968); Burke, Kenneth. *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969).

<sup>14</sup> Bourdieu, "Marriage Strategies as Strategies of Social Reproduction," 120.

The subject's human conduct embraces what Bourdieu calls *amor fati*, "love of one's own destiny."<sup>15</sup> In the Bosnian language, the same notion is referred to as *sudbina*, accepting, even believing in the inevitability of a life course, no matter what the consequences, even when not freely chosen. The subject's fate, which she did not choose as a rational actor or desire, is marriage in this village. Such is what she tells her mother and aunt when they come for her three days later. She embraces her fate despite its formidable difficulties and resistance from others, including her mother-in-law. With *amor fati*, there is a transfiguration, "a transfiguration of fate into free choice."<sup>16</sup> When the subject tells her mother her decision, she shows that now her marriage has an achieved rather than an ascribed status. Her position is impregnable to her mother as well as her mother-in-law. She, as it were, kills two birds with one stone. The powerfulness of her conduct at the age of fourteen cannot be underestimated; it matches the powerfulness of her husband's conduct.

Not only is *habitus* a theoretical lens through which to view elopement, but elopement, we now see, is a practice through which to view the concept of *habitus*. The occasional self-reflection of the subject and the socially rational views of significant others (the mother-in-law, the police, her parents) do not free her conduct from the tautological grip of *habitus*. "Marriage strategies as such must therefore not be seen in the abstract, unrelated to inheritance strategies, fertility strategies, and even pedagogical strategies. In other words, they must be seen as one element in the entire system of biological, cultural, and social reproduction."<sup>17</sup> The reason neither self-reflection nor rational understanding breaks the grip of *habitus* is because *habitus* is an element of a system, not being more than the sum of its parts, nor being the system itself. The problem with subjective intentions is that they assume a whole, a unity greater than the parts, and for Bourdieu, subjective intentions play no empirically justifiable role in understanding human conduct. For Bourdieu, instincts guide social conduct, instincts that are objectively grounded and non-subjective. *Habitus* does not represent a

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

unity greater than its parts, which is why the concept is an empirical one and defies further theorizing. Neither a positivistic reduction to behavior nor a hermeneutical inflation to action, *habitus* directly frames how social conduct is understood in Bourdieu's sociology. To theorize *habitus* as more than a tautology endows *habitus* with an ontology it does not possess in the work of Bourdieu. Such is the bitter-sweet, fatalistic, and seemingly wise character of not only *amor fati*, but *habitus*. Consider again Ivo Andrić's *Bridge on the Drina*. Fata commits suicide on her wedding day, leaping into the river Drina after her father arranged an unwanted marriage. The father ignored his daughter's right to choose whom to marry, which, from her point of view, justified suicide. The oath that Fata made to herself nullified the marriage vow that she was forced to make.<sup>18</sup>

In an essay titled "Does gender fit? Bourdieu, feminism, and conceptions of social order," Leslie McCall asks how a feminist *habitus* can be described. Feminist *habitus*, she argues, would replace feminist standpoint epistemology, where feminist standpoint epistemology presupposes and stipulates a privileged ontology for understanding. Feminist *habitus*, McCall argues, would better serve feminist theorizing.<sup>19</sup> To provide an example for this argument, notice that during an elopement the girl is collectively unconscious (neglecting the wishes of parents, future mother-in-law, and transgressing expectations of family) but individually conscious. The girl breaks out of the confines of rule-guided behaviors within a social structure that is patriarchal. In this sense, the girl is in the vanguard of feminist practice. While regulated behavior is collectively conscious but individually unconscious, elopement is collectively unconscious but individually conscious. The young girl is a precursor to feminist practice insofar as the practice is intrinsically emancipatory. *Habitus* provides a path to liberation.

Feminist *habitus* then initiates liberation within a sexist social order. Can feminist *habitus*, though, sustain the emancipation of women? Is feminist *habitus* political? What concept of the human

<sup>18</sup> Andrić, Ivo. *Bridge on the Drina* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

<sup>19</sup> McCall, Leslie. "Does gender fit? Bourdieu, feminism, and conceptions of social order." *Theory and Society* 21 (1992): 858.



species-being does *habitus* exemplify? Karl Marx formulates what the species-being of human beings is vis-à-vis the species-being of animals. Marx says the following of the species-being of animals: "The animal is one with its life activity. It does not distinguish the activity from itself. It is its activity."<sup>20</sup> In this context, we ask to what degree does *habitus* resonate with the species-being of animals? How is *habitus* like the life activity of animals? They seem similar: both are one with their life activity. Marx then says the following regarding the species-being of human beings: "But human beings make their life activity itself an object of their will and consciousness. They have a conscious life-activity. ... Conscious life-activity distinguishes human beings from the life-activity of animals."<sup>21</sup> To what degree, does *habitus* resonate or not resonate with the species-being of human beings? The human being is capable of being both collectivity and individually conscious. According to Marx, it is intrinsic to the very nature of human beings. *Habitus*, though, seems to be closer to the life-activity of animals. While *habitus* can initiate emancipation, can it sustain the political action that leads to liberation in an oppressive society? Politics needs to be collectivity conscious. In the next chapter, we will pursue this matter from a psychological perspective.

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<sup>20</sup> Marx, Karl. "Alienated Labor" in *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, translated by T. B. Bottomore (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), 125–7.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



## CHAPTER 5

# Deciding in a Blink

*“How is it possible to gather the necessary information for a sophisticated judgment in such a short time?”<sup>1</sup>*

The decision to elope that exemplifies *habitus* occurs on the spur of the moment. In Chapter 2 one woman recalled how she decided. She was fifteen; her husband was seven years older than her. One evening he picked her up in his car and asked her to marry him. This elopement would be against the law because she was underage; it would put his police career at risk. There were reasons to say no. There were rules to respect. She, though, said yes. Her decision occurred in a blink.

Another woman in Chapter 2 recalled how she decided to elope. Her boyfriend and she were having dinner at a restaurant. They lingered a long time into the evening. She then was afraid to return home because her father was very strict. At this moment, her boyfriend said, “Let’s get married.” She said yes and made her decision on the spot without any previous planning.

Recall that after being pulled out of *kolo*, the fourteen-year-old girl declared, “No, I do not want to marry him.” The police said she could return to the dance, and they would not permit the young man to touch her again. A policeman and acquaintance of her father confided that this young man was a good lad, who worked hard, and came from a good family. She was curious as to what marriage was all about, and she did not want to return home to her parents in

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<sup>1</sup> Gladwell, Malcolm. *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2005), 23.

shame. She changed her mind and decided to marry. She decided in a flash.

We heard how another woman recounted her mother's elopement. Her father stopped in front of her grandmother's house and asked her mother to come with him. She had favored him over her other boyfriends, and her grandmother had forbidden her mother from seeing this man. Without any planning or forethought, she said yes and left with him. She did not know that she would elope and did not know that he would ask at this time and on this day. Her mother's elopement was an example of a true elopement for the daughter.

Are these spur of the moment decisions bad decisions? Does more discernment need to go into the decisions? Does the quality of a decision depend upon the length of time and the effort put into making the decision? Can good decisions happen in a short space of time and with little conscious effort? In turn, can bad decisions happen after long deliberation, study, and careful reflection? Perhaps these questions were on the mind of Pierre Bourdieu when he formulated the concept of *habitus*.

In a book titled *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, Malcolm Gladwell describes and explains several studies in psychology and behavioral economics on human cognition that occurs rapidly and automatically with little information and conscious thinking. Gladwell calls this form of mental processing "thin-slicing."<sup>2</sup> Thin-slicing, of course, can also be as fallible as carefully considered decisions. The unconscious mind can be as wrong-headed as the conscious mind. Thin-slicing can be as subject to prejudice as deep reflection. Thin-slicing draws upon the adaptive unconsciousness rather than the unconsciousness that Sigmund Freud calls the *id*. The decisions based on the adaptive unconscious are, Gladwell argues, a powerful force in a human life.

Thin-slicing seems not only to capture but also to justify the decision-making of the women who shared their stories of elopement for this study. Spontaneous decisions can be as good, even better, than carefully planned decisions. The decision to elope (though not always) is a spontaneous decision. The decision to have a tradi-

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 18–48.

tional wedding is typically planned and considered in consultation and collaboration with family. The first way of marriage encourages thin-slicing; the second way of marriage encourages thick-slicing.

Gladwell asks, "How is it possible to gather the necessary information for a sophisticated judgment in such a short time?"<sup>3</sup> His answer is that we are able to do so because our unconscious engages in thin-slicing. One does not need to pay attention to everything that happens. One does not need to take a thick-slice. When we thick-slice, we are overwhelmed. Our consciousness is overloaded, and we cannot select and measure what is most important and most crucial. Thin-slicing is selective. One woman from Eastern Sarajevo sums up the thoughts of many of the women interviewed for this study: "You are so young, I could not imagine that this is a decision for life. You have so much energy. You are so happy. After some time, you realize that you made a decision for your entire life." Thin-slicing focuses on what one needs to know. In this case, what one needs to know is that one is in love. In *Family in Transition: A Study of 300 Yugoslav Villages*, Vera Stein Erlich writes, "In Bosnia... love is considered a sanctioned feeling and a legitimate motivation for decisions."<sup>4</sup>

It is important to note that, in the survey conducted by Mareco Index Bosnia fall 2013, of the women in Bosnia-Herzegovina who eloped, 94% are still married. Of the women who did not elope, 89.3% are still married. The high percentage of women who eloped and are still married suggests that the decision to elope was a steadfast one (see Table 5.1), even if it occurred in a blink.

William Lockwood and Tone Bringa discuss how divorce is an easier option for Bosniak than for Catholic and Orthodox women. For this reason, Lockwood and Bringa suggest that elopements occur more frequently among Bosniak women.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>4</sup> Erlich, Vera St. *Family in Transition: A Study of 300 Yugoslav Villages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 188.

<sup>5</sup> See Lockwood, William G. "Bride Theft and Social Maneuverability in Western Bosnia." *Anthropological Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (1974): 266, and Bringa, Tone. *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 132–33.

**Table 5.1. Marital status by elopements of females in Bosnia-Herzegovina**

|                       |                | Elopement |       |           |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----------|-------|-----------|
|                       |                | Yes       | No    | Row Total |
| <b>Marital status</b> | <b>Married</b> | 94.0%     | 89.3% | 90.3%     |

*Source:* Mareco Index Bosnia, September 2013.

A chi-square test was performed to examine the relation between marital status and elopement. The relation between these variables was statistically insignificant,  $\chi^2$  (2, n=831) = 3.447,  $p > .01$

As already indicated, however, the findings from the Mareco Index Bosnia survey do not support this suggestion (see Table 1.1 and 1.2 again on page 10). Moreover, the percentage of women in Bosnia-Herzegovina who eloped and are still married is nearly identical for each national group. The percentage of Croat women who eloped and are still married is 96.1%; the percentage of Bosniak women who eloped and are still married is 95.3%; and the percentage of Serb women who eloped and are still married is 94.2%. There is no significant difference (see Table 5.2). Elopement is not a custom of one particular ethnic group in Bosnia-Herzegovina; it is a trans-ethnic custom representing a certain national character. This point will be developed more fully in later chapters.

**Table 5.2. Married by nationality and by elopement of females in Bosnia-Herzegovina**

|  | Nationality    | Elopement |
|--|----------------|-----------|
|  | <b>Croat</b>   | 96.1%     |
|  | <b>Bosniak</b> | 95.3%     |
|  | <b>Serb</b>    | 94.2%     |

*Source:* Mareco Index Bosnia, Sarajevo, September 2013.

Sample size: n=831.

Not every decision to elope is based on love. Nor is every decision made in a blink. Bringa describes the term “fictive abduction,” noting the work of the Sarajevo-based ethnographer, Radmila Kajmaković.<sup>6</sup> A fictive abduction is performative; its content is dramaturgical, to use Erving Goffman’s term. The bride is not pas-

<sup>6</sup> Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way*, 123.

sive but active in a performative way, a performance that Goffman would call *positively* cynical. Neither the bride nor the groom is taken in by their own performance of a mock abduction, which is what makes the fictive abduction more like an elopement. The bride and the groom collude in the performance.

Bringa then coins a second term, “fictive elopement,” which she says is “typically the result of courtship which has lasted for a longer period of time and known to most of the villagers.”<sup>7</sup> A fictive elopement occurs after some consideration and preparation before the event, especially, perhaps, in the groom’s household which prepares the wedding feast that occurs after the “fictive elopement.” A “fictive elopement” does not occur in a blink. It combines elements of two kinds of marriage—true elopement and wedding feast, which are combined for practical reasons (to save money) and traditional reasons (to follow cultural customs).

In fall 2013, a question on how people married was included in an omnibus survey conducted by Mareco Index Bosnia, based in Sarajevo and a member of Gallop International (see Appendix). The question was: “Can you tell me which of the following took place when you married your spouse?” The respondent could answer yes or no to any of the following:

- Engagement party
- Elopement (without the parents of the girl knowing)
- Traditional wedding
- Civil ceremony
- Religious ceremony in a church or mosque
- Brought a dowry (*miraz*)
- Living together without being married
- The parents of spouses visited each other four or more times a year
- Married someone in the same faith

As mentioned, 21.7% of the women said they eloped without the knowledge of their parents. Of these women who eloped, however, 48.1% also had a traditional wedding (See Table 5.3).

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 126.

**Table 5.3. Traditional wedding by elopements of women in Bosnia-Herzegovina**

|                     |     | Married by elopement |
|---------------------|-----|----------------------|
| Traditional wedding | Yes | 48.1%                |
|                     | No  | 51.9%                |

Source: Mareco Index Bosnia, Sarajevo, September 2013.

Sample size: n=987.

Since almost half of the women who eloped had a traditional wedding as well, this could be an example of what Bringa calls a “fictive abduction,” noting its dramaturgical and ceremonial character. Interestingly, and more difficult to explain, of the women who eloped, 24.8% had an engagement party as well (see Table 5.4).

**Table 5.4. Engagement party by elopements of women in Bosnia-Herzegovina**

|                  |     | Married by elopement |
|------------------|-----|----------------------|
| Engagement party | Yes | 24.8%                |
|                  | No  | 75.2%                |

Source: Mareco Index Bosnia, Sarajevo, September 2013.

Sample size: n=987.

If there is an engagement party before an elopement, the elopement or the possibility of an elopement is not a well-kept secret. The couple is not only planning but announcing and making public their plans to marry. Also interestingly, of the women who eloped, 40.7% brought a dowry (*miraz*) with them (see Table 5.5). A dowry is typically brought when there is a traditional wedding. If the daughter elopes, the dowry is not necessarily brought. The elopement releases the parents from this obligation if they are angry. The daughter is seen as abandoning the family. Of the women who eloped, however, 40.7% brought a dowry with them.

**Table 5.5. Brought a dowry (*miraz*) by elopement of women in Bosnia-Herzegovina**

|                                  |     | Married by elopement |
|----------------------------------|-----|----------------------|
| Brought a dowry ( <i>miraz</i> ) | Yes | 40.7%                |
|                                  | No  | 59.3%                |

Source: Mareco Index Bosnia, Sarajevo, September 2013.

Sample size: n=987.



If the bride brings a dowry after an elopement, the elopement did not occur without the acceptance and support of her parents, even if the dowry may be slow in forthcoming.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, elopement is a marriage custom that is integrated and woven into other marriage customs. There is fluidity between the marriage customs. When formulating elopement as an ideal type, it is important to remember that the ideal type does not directly and perfectly correspond with the social realities under examination. As Weber writes, “In *all* cases, rational and irrational, sociological analysis both abstracts from reality and at the same time helps us to understand it.”<sup>8</sup> In the next chapter, we will look at the secret as a sociological concept, drawing upon the work of Georg Simmel in order to understand more clearly what the elopement is as an oriented course of social action. The concept of the secret helps us understand how the elopement can be more than behavior and also more than *habitus*. The concept helps us understand how the elopement can be action or socially meaningful behavior.

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<sup>8</sup> Weber, Max. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 110.



## CHAPTER 6

# The Secret and Elopement

*"The secret produces an immense enlargement of life."*<sup>1</sup>

As indicated in a previous chapter, the difference between an elopement, where a young girl decides to leave her home without her parents' knowledge, and a bride kidnapping, where a girl is forced against her will into marriage, is clear. The practices, though, are discussed interchangeably in some of the anthropological literature on elopement. Since the practices seem similar, Daniel Bates and Ayse Kudat intertwine elopement and bride theft. Their purpose is to show how the marriage practices in Turkey diverge from traditional norms so as to explain kinship structure in a community objectively and critically.<sup>2</sup>

The difference between elopement and bride kidnapping is implicitly based on an ethical distinction, which frames how the empirical practice is viewed. The ethical distinction determines our social knowledge of the practice. Bride theft involves coercion and is tantamount to rape. To understand elopement as an oriented course of action, the crucial variable is that the girl decides to elope. Her conduct exemplifies her free will even within the context of limiting and controlling social conditions. This crucial variable, of course, is a subjective one, residing with the actor herself. Still, the

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<sup>1</sup> Simmel, Georg. *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1950), 334.

<sup>2</sup> Bates, Daniel G. "Introduction: Kidnapping and Elopement as Alternative Systems of Marriage." *Anthropological Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (1974): 233–37, and Kudat, Anse. "Institutional Rigidity and Individual Initiative in Marriages of Turkish Peasants." *Anthropological Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (1974): 288–303.

variable is the lens through which we observe and understand the actor's agency.<sup>3</sup>

It may be difficult not only for an observer (whether parent, friend, or police officer) but also for the actor herself to know the subjective motivation of the actor in an event as momentous as marriage. In the heat of passion, this variable may be invisible not only to the observer but to the actor herself, who may be caught up in the moment. In the grip of excitement and fear, there may be less self-understanding and reflection. A risk is being taken. The unknown character of the elopement is frightening.

There is a way, however, to distinguish elopement and bride kidnapping, a way that is observable to both the observer and the actor and provides an objective account of the distinction, although, admittedly, after the fact. The secret, the fact that the decision to elope is concealed, is a part of an elopement, not only serving a utilitarian need but also structuring the elopement as meaningful behavior. During the elopement did the girl conceal from her parents her intention to elope? Was the concealment crucial to carrying through with the elopement? Did the secret stage and frame the drama of the event? While there can be multiple reasons and motivations why a secret is necessary (household politics, fear, family history, personality, other suitors, parental control), what is of interest here is that a secret, the self-reflective employment of a secret, is crucial for an elopement to be what it is.

In her study, Tone Bringa discusses the secret as important to the achieved character of elopement as a marriage custom. For an elopement to be a true elopement, according to Bringa's informants, the intention to elope must be kept secret.<sup>4</sup> Although the girl's parents may suspect or worry, they are not to be told. Only the girl and the young man are to know of their intention to elope, something which the two establish collaboratively in surreptitious ways. On this type of social interaction that is structured by a secret, Georg

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<sup>3</sup> For a theological account of the relation between love and freedom, see Noonan, John T. Jr. "Marriage in the Middle Ages: Power to Choose." *Viator* 4 (1973): 419–434.

<sup>4</sup> Bringa, Tone. *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 123–33.

Simmel writes, “For this reason, the secret is surrounded by the possibility and temptation of betrayal; and the external danger of being discovered is interwoven with the internal danger, which is like the fascination of an abyss, of giving oneself away.”<sup>5</sup>

Georg Simmel wrote an astute essay on what the “secret” is in social interaction and how the secret structures, he says, virtually every social relation. What is useful about Simmel’s essay in this context is that he accounts for the secret, not just as a means, but also as an end. In this discussion, the secret is not just a way to describe the attributes of a particular social interaction, but a sociological concept. Simmel writes:

The employment of secrecy as a sociological technique, as a form of action without which certain purposes—since we live in a social environment—can simply not be attained, is understandable immediately. Not quite so evident are the attractions and values of the secret beyond its significance as a mere means.<sup>6</sup>

In Bringa’s work, the secret is crucial to how the distinction between fictive and true elopement is constructed. Bringa’s informants point out that when “everyone knows” an elopement is going to happen, which was sometimes the case in the village where Bringa did her ethnography, it is no longer a true elopement.<sup>7</sup> If family and neighbors know of an impending marriage by elopement, there ought then to be a traditional wedding and a celebration to which family and neighbors are invited and to which they may bring gifts. For Bringa’s informants, the problem with fictive elopement is that it looks like a way to avoid wedding costs. Fictive elopements thus lack the character and lose the social function of the elopement.

Consider the following example from an interview discussed previously in Chapter 2. Recall the story of a mother’s elopement. Her father had been employed in the city and passed her mother’s home daily while she was in the garden. When he was coming back from his job, they met. Her grandmother found out and did not

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<sup>5</sup> Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, 334.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 332.

<sup>7</sup> Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way*, 123–26.

permit her daughter to see him anymore. One day he was passing in his car and asked if she wanted to go now. They had not made any agreement. They had not made any previous arrangement. Her mother said yes, and she left in the car with him. She did not tell her sister or her mother that she was leaving. She just left with him from her garden with nothing but the clothes she was wearing. She had not known what day they would elope or even if they would elope. It was a secret even to the person who eloped, which is why the informant insisted that here was an example of *ukrala se* in its purest form.

Simmel explains the universal function of the secret in social interaction this way: "The strongly emphasized exclusion of all outsiders makes for a correspondingly strong feeling of possession."<sup>8</sup> The secret excludes the parents. The exclusion results in a sense of autonomy on the part of the young girl who is eloping. Simmel writes, "The decisive point in this respect is that the secret is a first-rate element of individualization."<sup>9</sup> The secret is employed in the first step to be taken towards independence from one's natal family and the achievement of adulthood. From a psychoanalytic point of view, Victor Tausk explains the principle this way: "Until the child has been successful in its first lie, the parents are supposed to know everything, even its most secret thoughts. ... The striving for the right to have secrets from which the parents are excluded is one of the most powerful factors in the formation of the ego, especially in establishing and carrying out one's own will."<sup>10</sup> The secret helps the maturation of the young girl and her transition to adulthood.

The secret also gives the girl and the young man a special sense of belonging together, of possessing each other. The secret makes the girl and the young man a dyad in that they hold something together about which nobody else knows. The secret becomes the content as well as the form of their intimacy; it binds them together with a special knowledge and gives their future together a sense of limitless possibility and power. "The secret produces an immense

<sup>8</sup> Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, 332.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 334.

<sup>10</sup> Tausk, Victor. "On the Origin of the 'Influencing Machine' in Schizophrenia." *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 2 (1933): 519–57.

enlargement of life,” writes Simmel.<sup>11</sup> Bringa’s informants indicate that if secrecy is not a decisive feature of the collaborative action of the girl and the young man during the elopement, parents and neighbors are insufficiently excluded from the event and the girl and the young man do not adequately achieve a sense of self-possession as a couple, that is, as a self-sustaining dyad.

The secret is crucial to the formation of a dyadic relationship. The following account, shared in Chapter 2, demonstrates the significance of this point in everyday life. An Orthodox woman told of her elopement which occurred when she was fifteen years old. One night her future husband picked her up and said he would like to marry her. This decision was a risk for him because he worked for the police. She said yes. One hour after midnight they eloped while her parents were asleep. A neighbor, who had eloped when she was fifteen, helped her, keeping a packed bag at her home during the evening. Her neighbor said “This is not right, but I will support you.” When they departed, her neighbor wished her luck. They went to Dubrovnik for their honeymoon. She called her mother after two days. Her mother was very sad and thought that she could solve this problem with a conversation, undo what had been done. The dyad, however, had been established through the power of the secret and could not now be broken. The mother could not get her daughter back with a conversation. Her daughter was irretrievably gone.

The word for go-between in Bosnian is *provodadžija* for a man or *provodadžika* for a woman. Elopements often occur with the help of a third party. This third party may be someone who also married by elopement. It may also be someone who lives in the village of the groom and who can vouch for the character of the groom and reassure the girl about the good fortune of her decision. While the secret is an essential feature of an elopement’s structure, the secret can also be held and either protected or betrayed by a third party. The secret does not need to be held exclusively by the couple. It can be shared with a third party, where the girl or the young man trust a third party to keep their secret.

Here is another example where a third party plays the role of the go-between. The subject was from an area near the Drina river.

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<sup>11</sup> Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, 334.

When she was twenty, she met her cousin who lived in a distant village. He recommended a man to her. Her cousin set up a meeting, and she met the man in a café where they talked for fifteen minutes. At that point, he asked her, do you want to marry me? She said yes. The two set everything up in three days because he wanted to marry right away. At midnight, three cousins and an aunt came with him. She left with them at night, walking some distance through a forest. They then took a train to her husband's village. Her mother, though, did not know where she was. For two days, her mother looked for her. Her mother learned eventually from her cousin that she had eloped. The secret, the forcefulness of the secret, was not only an effective but also a necessary strategy to marry. Notice also that in this story, like a previous one, one aim of the elopement was to break free from the control of not a father but a mother. Elopement was a way for the girl to free herself from the unfairness of not a patriarch but a matriarch.

An entrusted secret can also be betrayed. When speaking with a Bosnian couple, I mentioned *ukrala se*. They were surprised that as a foreigner I was aware of the custom. They laughed and looked at each other because they had married by elopement. The husband mentioned his mother, and his wife rolled her eyes. The couple planned to elope rather than have a traditional wedding. It was a decision the couple made together. The wife was an only child and did not want to reveal her decision to her parents, fearing their objections and hurting them. A day before the elopement, the husband told his mother of their plan to elope. Excited by the news, the mother prepared a wedding ceremony quickly, inviting family and neighbors. When the wife eloped, she thought her action was a secret and was surprised when she came to her husband's home and there was a wedding ceremony prepared. Losing the secret to another, having the secret betrayed, somehow deflated the intensity of the event and the spirit of the decision to elope. For the wife, something that was hers and her husband's was taken away. For traditional reasons, her husband's mother had not kept the entrusted secret. The wife still harbored a small degree of resentment that the secret under which their elopement was to occur had been compromised. Simmel helps us understand her resentment. "The secret offers, so to speak, the possibility of a second world alongside the



manifest world; and the latter is decisively influenced by the former.”<sup>12</sup> Marriage is idealistic and romantic. The wife’s intention was to enter unobstructed into this second world of marriage with her husband, not the manifest world with which she was quite familiar.

The secret allows us to distinguish the elopement as an action rather than either a behavior or what Bourdieu calls *habitus*. The secret shows how the social action is both collectivity conscious and individually conscious. Recall that behavior is in its pure form collectivity conscious but individually unconscious. As B.F. Skinner says, insight is of secondary importance when explaining the causes of social behavior. The social and material conditions in which behavior occurs are the determining variables.<sup>13</sup> In contrast to behavior, *habitus* is collectivity unconscious but individually conscious. While *habitus* is, by definition, unconscious of social structures themselves and assumes a non-reflective relation to social structures, it is individually conscious. When it comes to playing the game of life, *habitus* excels. In contrast to behavior and *habitus*, action is both collectivity conscious and individually conscious, and it is the secret that facilitates action rather than either behavior or *habitus*. The secret is both a means essential to action and an end inherent to the structure of action. Through the secret the actor knows what it is that the group or others do not know and are prohibited from knowing. Through the secret the actor knows that others do not know what the actor knows. Moreover, as Simmel indicates, the significance of what the actor knows is magnified by the knowledge that others do not know what it is that the actor knows, for example, when the young girl will elope or even that she will elope.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 330.

<sup>13</sup> Skinner, Burrhus F. *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing, 2001).



## CHAPTER 7

# Elopement and Ego-Identity

*"The act of choice is what keeps a relationship alive."*<sup>1</sup>

Ego-identity, as conceptualized by Erik Erikson, is the feeling of being at home in one's body and the sense of "knowing where one is going."<sup>2</sup> Ego-identity seems, at first glance, to be an obvious and simple concept. Every ego has an identity, and every identity has an ego. The concept seems tautological. When, however, we separate the terms, ego and identity, the concept becomes less obvious and more complex. We can imagine egos without identities just as we can imagine identities without egos.

Erikson accounts for the development of a healthy ego identity through eight stages in a lifespan. The transition from one stage to the next involves a crisis that is psychosocial in nature. It involves the psychological needs of the individual conflicting with the needs of society. In each stage, there is the opportunity for maturation. As the ego successfully resolves each crisis that is social in nature, ego-identity develops.

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<sup>1</sup> Perel, Esther. "A More Perfect Union: Esther Perel on Intimacy, Infidelity, and Desire in Long Term Relationships." *The Sun* 456 (2013): 5. Another version of this chapter was presented at the conference "Young Women and Gender Equality in post-Yugoslav Societies: Research, Practice and Policy" in Zagreb, Croatia in November 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Erikson, Erik H. *Childhood and Society* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1963); Erikson, Erik H. *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1980); Erikson, Erik H. "Late Adolescence" in *The Student and Mental Health: An International View*, ed. Daniel H. Funkenstein (Princeton: Riverside, 1956).

Erikson puts emphasis on the adolescent period. Adolescence is a time for risk-taking and identity exploration. It is a time when a young person's narcissistic ego gains an identity by making a commitment. Children become more independent and, at the same time, want to belong to a society and fit in. The individual chooses a future, even as the individual is located in social conditions and historical circumstances. As theorized by Erikson, ego-identity affirms in a dialectical manner both the ontology of individualism and the ontology of a social group.

In the narratives of elopements collected and previously reported for this study, a positive and strong relation between elopement and ego-identity is found. For example, in the following interview, the interviewee celebrated the moment of interpersonal growth that followed from her decision to elope. She insisted that her decision resulted in a strong rather than fragile ego-identity. Her husband, who was not from her town and worked in the police force, said he would like to marry her. She recalled how confident he was. She said yes. They eloped while her parents were asleep. They went to Dubrovnik for their honeymoon. After their honeymoon, they went to her husband's village on the border near Montenegro, where there then was a wedding celebration. Her husband was from a mixed village of Muslim and Orthodox Bosnians, and all the neighbors gathered to see the bride. When guests came and asked where the bride was, she was on the field with other children playing football. She received gifts from the Muslim and Orthodox Bosnians in the village. Since she was young, she was not expected to follow several traditional customs when a bride comes into her husband's house. Still, she took gifts of sugar and coffee to women neighbors and cigarettes to men. Her husband's family, who only had sons, was happy to gain a daughter-in-law. After the wedding celebration, the two families visited each other and formed the affinal relation called *prijatelj*i, a complementary rite of passage that will be discussed later in the book.

After sharing the story with zest and excitement, the woman reflected on its significance for her life. She said that this decision changed her life. The decision empowered her. It became the foundation for success in her life and her work. She returned to school, finished, and pursued a successful career. The elopement was magi-

cal, she said, giving her a stronger feeling, a sense of self-achievement, of having done it her way. She said that she would never marry with a traditional wedding.

A positive and strong relation between elopement and ego-identity is found in another interview. The interviewee was older when she eloped, twenty years old. She had been dating an older man who was a doctor, and he wanted to marry her. Her parents wished to have a doctor for a son-in-law. At a celebration for her uncle who was joining the army, she met her future husband. Though initially she ignored him, he escorted her home. Every morning he came to see her at the bus station as she went to work. She fell in love with him. Her father, though, did not like her husband's mother and did not want to be related to her. Her father did not want her as *prija*. One night she and her future husband went for coffee and dinner, and it was soon too late to return home at an appropriate time. Her husband said, "Let's get married now." She agreed and they went to her cousin's house. She had not taken any clothes or things, just a small bag. Without fully understanding what was occurring, her cousin told her parents. When her parents heard, her mother collapsed and could not speak. Her father did not eat for ten days. When they went to her husband's house and her husband's father and brothers saw that they had eloped, they joked, "Who will stay alive?" When their families later came together to affirm their affinal relation through marriage, her father drank too much and became sick. He went to the window for air, and her husband held him at the window. At that point, her mother made a joke, "Take care of him. Do not throw him out the window." This particular memory is a fond one for her. Her husband died in 1992 during the war. They had lived together for fourteen years. The interviewee said she was happy she could decide with whom she could have those years. She is a grandmother now. She said, "When you marry because of love, you have everything."

Erikson's formulation of ego-identity helps us understand the feelings of this woman while reflecting on her elopement. When loving in an absolute way, she also comes to love herself. In leaving her identity as the child of her parents, she finds herself as a mature adult. She leaps into a void, into something unknown and uncertain, but still lands on her feet and stands tall. This positive experience

was formative and now confirms her stance in the world. As Erikson says, “We know that when this [ego-identity] is achieved, play becomes freer, health more radiant, sex more adult, and work more meaningful.”<sup>3</sup>

Another interviewee, previously discussed, also pointed to the achievement of ego-identity through elopement. This interviewee held up her mother’s elopement as an example. Her father was passing in his car, asked if she wanted to go now, and her mother said yes. The eros of this behavior, Erikson would argue, is crucial to understanding ego-identity’s development. The eros is channeled socially and affirms the ontology of the individual and the ontology of the social group. At the age of twenty-eight her mother became a widow. Her mother never remarried, living till she was eighty-six years old. Each of her mother’s five children finished school, found good jobs, and married. The interviewee admired her mother’s ego strength. Erikson writes:

A strong ego, secured in its identity by a strong society, does not need, and in fact is immune to, any attempt at artificial inflation. Its tendency is toward the testing of what feels real; the mastery of that which works; the understanding of that which proves necessary, the enjoyment of the vital, and the extermination of the morbid.<sup>4</sup>

The last interview discussed in this chapter occurred in eastern Bosnia during the recent war. The interviewee was seventeen when she eloped. During the wedding ceremony, they gave her a cup of salt, wheat, and candy to throw, the wheat going into her husband’s ear. They still laugh about this when they recall their marriage. Two years later, when she was pregnant, they had a civil ceremony. The municipal clerks assumed that she was getting married now because she was pregnant. Both her husband and she found this amusing. They felt self-assured about their marriage, and it did not matter what the municipal clerk thought.

A crucial feature of the elopement is that the girl chooses to elope autonomously. While circumstances, conditions, and timing,

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<sup>3</sup> Erikson, Erik H. “Ego Development and Historical Change” in *Identity and the Life Cycle: Selected Papers* (New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1959), 26.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

often difficult, constrain and define the event, it is nevertheless a choice that comes to give the young woman an achieved ego-identity. The choice makes elopement more than behavior; the choice makes elopement action. While elopement remains a behavior governed by external circumstances and social structures, it becomes more than that. It is action where action takes into account external circumstances and social conditions and, because of the choice being made, is not entirely ruled by external circumstances and social conditions. When successful, childhood narcissism is not rejected but transformed, and the adolescent's infantile sense of omnipotence is harnessed to a clear sense of reality. Consider the following well-known passage from Erikson and how it frames the psychological significance of elopement for the women in Bosnia-Herzegovina who chose to share their accounts:

It is only after a reasonable sense of identity has been established that real intimacy with others can be possible. The youth who is not sure of his or her identity shies away from interpersonal intimacy, and can become, as an adult, isolated or lacking in spontaneity, warmth or the real exchange of fellowship in relationship to others; but the surer the person becomes of their self, the more intimacy is sought in the form of friendship, leadership, love and inspiration.<sup>5</sup>

The women in this study believe that the formation of an ego-identity is an important part of a healthy, successful life. In the next chapter, we will consider further the reasoning behind this opinion.

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<sup>5</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 101.





## CHAPTER 8

# The Risk of Foreclosure in the Arranged Marriage

*"Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without affection."*<sup>1</sup>

One repeated theme in the narratives of Bosnian women who eloped is that elopement is a better way of marrying. The formation of an achieved ego-identity is important to one's life, and the elopement, the risk and courageous character of the event, is essential to the development of adult women who are free and strong. One woman said in an interview, "I would never marry in the traditional way. Elopement is magical. It creates a stronger feeling, of doing it your own way."

James E. Marcia, a developmental psychologist, expanded Erikson's work on identity and adolescence. For Marcia, a key variable in identity formation lies in an individual making a commitment to an identity. Making a commitment resolves the tension between identity and role confusion and leads to the creation of an achieved identity. Before a commitment is made, a person experiences an identity crisis, which is a necessary and natural event in the life-course of an individual.<sup>2</sup>

Marcia identifies four distinct identity statuses. The first identity status is the positive and complex one, namely, identity achieve-

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson, Margaret. "Jane Austen and a Family Elopement." *Persuasions* 16 (1994): 31.

<sup>2</sup> Marcia, James E. "Development and Validation of Ego-Identity Status." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 3 (1966): 551–58. Marcia, James E. "The Empirical Study of Ego-Identity" in *Identity and Development: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, ed. Harke A. Bosma et al. (London: Sage, 1994).

ment. An individual has gone through exploration of different identities, experienced a self-exploration crisis, and made a commitment to one as a result of this exploration. Each identity status has a certain social and also political character. With respect to identity achievement, Marcia writes:

Identity achievements seem to have made a kind of peace with their families, whereby differences among family members are acknowledged, accepted, and sometimes even appreciated, but they are not all necessarily reconciled. Identity achievements seem to be the most developed ... with a greater number of them than of the other statuses on their way to establishing intimate relations.<sup>3</sup>

A second identity status is moratorium. An individual actively explores different identities but has not made a commitment. The individual is uncertain; a meaningful choice has not been made. On the character of this identity status, Marcia writes, "Moratoriums impress one as intense, sometimes active and lively—sometimes internally preoccupied, struggling, engaging, and occasionally exhausting ... we have found them to be the most highly morally sensitive of the statuses as well as being the most anxious."<sup>4</sup>

A third identity status is foreclosure. This identity status contrasts with moratorium. A person makes a commitment but without undergoing any true identity exploration. The individual assumes a handed-down identity; the individual does not choose this identity. Instead, the identity and social role is chosen for the person, and this identity is more ascribed than achieved. In regard to this identity status, Marcia writes:

Frequently, they live with or near their parents ... they are authoritarian (they prefer to be told what to do by an acceptable authority rather than determining their own direction); set very high goals for themselves, which they maintain rigidly even in the face of failure; are somewhat inflexible in their thought processes; tend to espouse moral values at the level of law and order ... are generally obedient and conforming; and deal with self-disconfirming information by means of either a facade of acceptance or active resistance. ... They report, and their families report, a great deal of closeness and warmth. Upon closer examination, this "family love affair" seems to be contingent upon the foreclosures' continuing subscription to family values; remember, they are the identity status who does not explore.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Marcia, "The Empirical Study of Ego-Identity," 76.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

The fourth identity status is identity diffusion. This identity status lacks the positive attributes of the two previous identity statuses. There has been no existential searching for an identity. Nor has there been any identity commitment. The individual stays in the amorphous state of identity diffusion, resulting most likely in social isolation. Marcia writes on this identity status, "Identity Diffusions have the most difficulty thinking under stress, conform the most to external demands, are the most susceptible to self-esteem manipulation, and have the lowest levels of development of moral thought."<sup>6</sup>

Notice that in this typology the least socially isolated identity status is identity achievement; an individual's autonomy and an individual's integration into a social world occur simultaneously in the course of the individual's action. The outcome of the elopement for several Bosnian women interviewed was the identity status that Marcia formulates as identity achievement.

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, at first glance ego-identity seems to be an obvious concept. What ego does not have an identity? What identity does not have an ego? When we separate the terms, however, the concept is less obvious. A person actively involved in exploring different identities but without making a commitment has an ego without an identity. A person making a commitment to an identity without allowing ego to take any serious risks in terms of self-discovery has an identity without an ego.

One theme in the narratives of Bosnian women who eloped is their feeling that elopement is a better way of marrying. The women were critical of the traditional wedding, and the reason for their criticism was that the traditional wedding stunts the development of a woman's sense of self. The women who marry with traditional weddings use a normative-oriented approach to making identity commitments. Doing what one's parents want, doing what is handed down, risks sacrificing something important to one's self. If the time of choosing is the parent's and not the daughter's, the daughter avoids identity exploration. Without having experienced a self-exploratory crisis, a woman makes a life-long commitment. Old values and ascribed roles are not seriously examined, and new alternatives are left unexplored. This problem is called foreclosure

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 76.

in Marcia's identity studies. The woman's identity is ascribed rather than achieved, which is a less desirable outcome with respect to the self-construction theory of self.

In the works of the author, Borisav Stanković, the identity crisis that Marcia formulates as foreclosure is dramatized with psychological depth. Stanković's best-known novel, published in 1920, is *Nečista krv* [Impure Blood]. The novel depicts the plight of a young woman unable to free herself from the customs and restrictions of her oppressive, patriarchal community. The novel's drama is both realistic and painful. The theme is repeated in a short story titled, "The Dead Man's Wife," selected and translated by Svetozar Koljević in an anthology titled *Yugoslav Short Stories*.<sup>7</sup>

The tragedy of the woman named Anica in Stanković's short story is foreclosure. It is difficult to tell where her family's goals for her leave off and where her goals for herself begin. She becomes what others, in this case, her unruly brothers, prepared and intended her to become, namely, the wife of a wealthy man, a man with whom her brothers arranged an unwanted marriage while out drinking. Her beliefs about herself become identical to her brothers' beliefs about her. Her identity becomes a rigid role; her ego disappears entirely.

Consider how the following passage suggests the instability and fragility of her identity:

And almost in fear, apprehensively, having kissed the cross, she lights the candles for him with even greater haste, and then, as if anxious to get through it all as quickly as possible—she does not kneel, she falls on to the grave and sobs: "My poor Mita!"<sup>8</sup>

Her grief for her first husband, who was a controlling and cold figure in her life and toward whom she had no real emotional attachment, is performed ostentatiously and mechanically. The resulting anxiety and isolation of this identity status in the life of this character is depicted astutely by Stanković. Consider another passage in this regard:

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<sup>7</sup> Stanković, Borisav. "The Dead Man's Wife" in *Yugoslav Short Stories*, ed. Svetozar Koljević (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 96–129.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

And she is indeed waiting impatiently: she is afraid of something, particularly of the width and vastness of the road, of everything, of the people walking on it. And as soon as she feels that her little son has come back to her, taking her by the hand, she goes on, at once.<sup>9</sup>

At the end of the short story, Anica seems to have no ego at all, no ego strength, to choose to marry a man she truly loves and pines for and who loves her as well in an arranged second marriage after her first husband's death. Ita, the man that she herself would have chosen to marry the first time if she could have, proposed to marry her now as a widow, and her brothers accepted the proposal. She, instead, chose to marry the man her brothers initially proposed to her, a man whom she did not like, a man who uncared for children and a man whom she despised as much as her first husband. When given an out, a chance for happiness and joy in life, she refused to take the chance. She lacked the ego-strength to make this positive choice. By the end of the story, her identity status digresses from foreclosure to identity diffusion, baffling even her brothers and her mother with her unstable behavior and fragile sense of self. The rigidity that characterized her personality as a wife becomes brittle and shatters.

In the ethnographic studies of Andrei Simić and Joel Halpern, it is indicated that traditional marriage customs of communities can disempower young women, creating, by default, the identity status that Marcia calls foreclosure. They both, though, report that as women become older, this pattern is reversed. The sense of personal freedom that is exemplified through an elopement is, in fact, gained later in life. Simić observes that "As men grow older, they lose much of the aggressiveness and vitality that is so valued in machismo societies."<sup>10</sup> For women, the reverse process occurs. Simić writes, "Older women enjoy a latitude of behavior unconstrained by the strict rules enforced against them in their youth."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>10</sup> Simić, Andrei. "Machismo and Cryptomatriarchy: Power, Affect, and Authority in the Traditional Yugoslav Family" in *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans*, ed. Sabrina P. Ramet (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 20.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 21.

Identity achievement occurs later rather than earlier in life; the identity status of foreclosure declines and ego-identity is achieved. Simić cites the work of Joel Halpern to support this generalization:

As they advance in years, women approach a status more respected than at an earlier period and which more nearly resembles the status enjoyed by males. They are permitted a greater degree of freedom of conduct, hedged in by none of the restrictions imposed on them in their younger days. For example, old women may usually go where they please, whenever they wish. They can go alone to market, social gatherings, and weddings. In the company of their cronies, they can dance, drink, tell jokes, and “whoop it up” at a gathering of relatives and neighbors without being condemned for their behavior.<sup>12</sup>

For the women who eloped in Bosnia-Herzegovina, this identity status occurs sooner during one's youth. By eloping, they are not constrained by restrictions imposed upon them. With the elopement, they choose whom they want to marry, either well or poorly.

Adolescence is a crucial stage in a human being's maturation. The individual chooses a future, even as the individual is determined by a past history and social conditions. In interviews conducted with women in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the women affirmed, indeed celebrated, their identity achievement that followed as a consequence of the decision to elope. One subject described her elopement this way: Her parents wanted her to marry a successful doctor. Her marriage did not occur to cater to social pressure. She instead married because she loved her husband. Her marriage was her destiny, she said. It is life, life itself. She said that when you marry because of love, you have everything. The painfulness of Anica's life in Stanković's short story is that in the end she had nothing, not even a relationship with her son from her first husband.

Elopement stresses the significance of choice. Georg Simmel formulates the social significance of choice in terms of gender:

Since the woman is the chooser she is influenced much more by the individuality of the man than he is by hers. The fact that the man has this or that specific characteristic is responsible for her choice. The man, however, is more disposed to pursue the woman as woman. ... Reduced to its most general formulation, the motive responsible for this conduct on the part of the woman is the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 21.

fascination of freedom and power. Normally there are only one or two occasions on which the woman is in a position to decide the fundamental question of her life.<sup>13</sup>

While hardly true for every act of elopement, Simmel captures the passion of the elopement for some of the women interviewed for this study. The individuality of the man influences the woman's choice whereas, speaking generally, the category of women, that a woman fits into the category of woman, influences a man's choice. There is a striking example of this point from a childhood reminiscence recounted to Vera Stein Erlich and recorded before World War II. This story is about an arranged marriage, but it is interesting how the groom's mother approaches the bride first to arrange the marriage.

As a little boy I often sat in the home of our neighbor, Hasan. Hasan was always raving about Fata, with whom he had fallen in love. One day, while I was there, he asked his mother to go to the neighboring village to woo Fata. The mother, without losing time, walked to the village, accompanied by her little daughter who later on told me what had happened. The mother found Fata and asked her to marry her Hasan. Fata, for some reason, rejected the offer. The mother could not make up her mind to return home and disappoint Hasan, so she wandered about the village with her daughter. In an orchard she saw a girl whom she liked. She asked her whether she would marry her Hasan. The girl was ready to go and so she talked with her parents about it, and they agreed.

Hasan had been lying on the wall bench dreaming of Fata. When his mother entered the house, he jumped up, calling excitedly, "Mother, have you brought me Fata?" His mother said: "Not Fata, but another girl." Hasan embraced his mother happily and thanked her. I was very young then, but was much surprised how quickly Hasan was comforted.<sup>14</sup>

Hasan demonstrates Simmel's point regarding gender difference in how one chooses a spouse: men choose according to the category of women, choosing the woman not because of her individuality but because she falls into the category women. Men choose with a universal and less particular criteria. The criteria by which women

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<sup>13</sup> Simmel, Georg. "Flirtation" in *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*, ed. Peter Kivisto (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 126.

<sup>14</sup> Erlich, Vera St. *Family in Transition: A Study of 300 Yugoslav Villages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 187.

choose is more particular and less universal. Something about Hasan's mother and sister persuaded the young girl to say yes and seek the consent of her parents. The above story is an example of family folklore. In the next chapter, we consider what family folklore is and how it helps us come to know and understand elopement as a rite of passage.



## CHAPTER 9

# Family Folklore and Elopement

*“It seems to me that until now folklore has been studied (in fact, until now, there has only been the collection of raw material) as a ‘picturesque’ element. It ought to be studied as a ‘conception of the world’ of particular social strata which are untouched by modern currents of thought.”<sup>1</sup>*

*“Rituals of women’s initiation commonly include three closely related claims. They claim to transform a girl into a woman... They claim to renew society... Lastly, they claim to renew the cosmos.”<sup>2</sup>*

In the summer of July 2011, I initiated interviews in Bosnia-Herzegovina with Bosnian women who had eloped and wanted to share their stories. As mentioned, the interviews were arranged in collaboration with *Žene Ženama* [Women to Women], an NGO in Sarajevo which advocates in the public sector for human rights and women’s equality in civil society. Through their offices throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, they spoke with contacts who found participants and scheduled interviews. A young woman from Sarajevo studying in graduate school conducted the interviews, following a semi-structured interview protocol I provided. The women were talking to a younger, unmarried woman who was from their region; the interviewer and the interviewees knew each other’s families.

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<sup>1</sup> Gramsci, Antonio. “Observations on Folklore” in *International Folkloristics: Classic Contributions by the Founders of Folklore*, ed. Alan Dundes (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999), 134.

<sup>2</sup> Lincoln, Bruce. *Emerging from the Chrysalis: Rituals of Women’s Initiation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 105.

This acquaintance encouraged the women to think of themselves as sharing wisdom with a younger, unmarried woman. The rapport was close, and the interviewees appreciated the interest and the opportunity to share their stories. Two or three interviews lasted two hours.

The interviews, however, were also more than simply interviews. The stories the women were telling were performative. They were sharing not just personal memories, but family stories. These stories would be known in the anthropological literature as family folklore. The stories we were hearing had been told before. They had sharp details and a dramatic pace. During one interview, daughters and grandchildren sat in the large living room and listened to the story of their mother and grandmother. They laughed and smiled as they heard the story being told to strangers and watched to see the strangers' reactions. One stranger, myself, was a foreigner. At another interview, a group of friends sat together in an outside garden and listened attentively. At first, rather naively, I thought that not only I but also the people listening were hearing the story for the first time. After a little reflection I realized that the stories were too well told. The stories were vivid, well structured, and dramatic. While the questions that the interviewer asked turned the narration at times into an interview, the narrative event typically retained its performative character. We were being shown something intimate from within the family. We were listening to a cherished piece of family folklore; the interviewees were sharing a gift.<sup>3</sup>

It has been said to me that every Bosnian family has at least one story about an elopement in their family history. Many families have more than one story about an elopement in their family history. As I was reading about and investigating this subject, I would mention the subject while casually talking with people from Bosnia. Soon a story about an elopement in their own family would be shared. Their stories were narrated with a mixture of passion and reserve, pride and compunction, dignity and embarrassment.

Collecting family folklore is different from conducting in-depth interviews, although interviews, of course, elicit family folklore.

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<sup>3</sup> Baker, Holly Cutting, Amy J. Kotkin, and Steven J. Zeitlin. *A Celebration of American Family Folklore* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982).

The empirical accounts that come through interviews are unironic. The accounts are descriptive and focus as best as they can on what actually happened and on what people were thinking or feeling during an event. If a story is narrated like an in-depth interview, it is unironic and not really a story. In order for a story to be a story and to be a good story, it needs to be cast in an ironic frame. The story's content needs a paradoxical structure. This feature of family folklore, however, does not make the story non-descriptive. Description remains a part of the story. Family folklore is part story (part ironic) and part description (part history). The question of whether the story is empirically true or not is a secondary question. A story combines fact and fiction to achieve an ironic frame. Stories are based in part on a lie, a good lie. Given this distinction, collecting family folklore is different from conducting empirical interviews. The performative nature of the story-telling needs to be given space or, if you will, poetic license.

Consider this example: A young Bosnian man living in the United States played basketball at a black college in Ohio. He was the one white student or South Slav student at the black college and the only non-black student on the men's college basketball team. He felt comfortable at the college and adapted well, reflecting his heritage and Sarajevo socialization. Sometimes I went to watch his home basketball games when his team played another college, usually another black college. The young man was tall, six feet eight inches. He played center, setting picks for teammates and pulling down rebounds. He was the sixth man on the team. After a game he and I would go to a pub for a beer. One evening he told me the story of how his uncle in Sarajevo married. His uncle lived in Sarajevo, but he was from a rural area. The customs with which he was familiar were village customs, not the city ways of Sarajevo. His uncle was visiting a village; a relative said to him that he knew of a girl he might want to meet; and his uncle went to her house. They talked through the window while he stood outside below the window in the dark. They talked for some time, and they liked each other. He asked her if she wanted to get married. She said yes and slipped through the window with only the clothes she had on. They drove to Sarajevo and his uncle's family home, which was a two-hour drive. When they walked into the lighted living room where

family members were sitting, she looked up at him and exclaimed, "Oh, you are so tall." The young man's uncle was taller than him, who, as mentioned, was six feet eight inches. The couple is still married and has children.

This story is a good story because it is cast in an ironic frame. How well does someone know the person they marry when they get married? In the West, we assume that people should spend time to get to know each other well before getting married. To what degree is this possible? When a couple marries, are they to some degree still strangers to each other? Are they acquaintances? Are they friends? Are they lovers? Georg Simmel shows that social relations can be distinguished by the kind and the amount of knowledge that two people have of each other. As strangers, a couple knows little about each other personally, and knows little about what is significant to each other as persons. There is a lot for the couple to get to know about each other upon getting married, which is why it may be a good reason to marry young when marrying someone one does not know well. Strangers can like each other and can be attracted to each other, but they simply do not have a developed or deep knowledge of each other as people.

Acquaintances, of course, have more knowledge of each other and a different kind of knowledge of each other. They have knowledge of each other's public characteristics. They know about the part of the person that is turned outward to the social world and the various roles the person plays. Friends have still a different kind and a different quality of knowledge of each other. Friends know what is significant to each other as persons. They also know that they share this knowledge of what is important to themselves as people. They are, after all, friends. Lovers, because they are passionately committed to each other, know each other as a unit, a single whole, and often do not know each other as individuals and specific persons. A lovers' knowledge of another is often a projection, perhaps somewhat narcissistic, of oneself onto the other.<sup>4</sup>

Which relation based on which kind and which amount of knowledge a couple has of each other is ideal for marriage? What

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<sup>4</sup> Simmel, Georg. *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1950), 307–10.

kind of knowledge is required for marriage? Must one know the other as more than a stranger? Must one know the other as a friend? Is being in love and not necessarily knowing the other as a separate individual necessarily a good thing? When people marry out of love, is it not often the case that after the marriage, they discover that to a significant degree they are strangers to each other? Can a marriage be successful if a couple only knew each other as strangers?

The young woman who eloped did not realize how tall the man with whom she eloped was. While courting her, he stood outside her window. She looked down upon him. After standing next to him in the light of a living room, she realized how tall he was, taller than six feet eight inches. She obviously liked him and was attracted to him. Since this story is an instance of family folklore, one can question how empirically true it is. This questioning of the story for empirical validity, however, misses the point. As family folklore, the story is part fiction and part reality. The ironic frame of this elopement story is what makes it a good story and lively family folklore.

Here is another story that exemplifies these features of family folklore. Although the story is about a marriage established through a traditional wedding, it has the key features of an elopement. A woman in the United States who was from a village in northeast Bosnia told the following story about her parents' marriage. Her paternal grandfather was an imam. He was from another village and visiting her mother's village to perform a religious service. A veiled young girl (the subject's mother) talked with the imam and did a kind deed for him. He said to her that she was a nice girl. The young girl, who was fourteen, asked the imam whether he had any sons with the same face as his. The imam's face was very handsome. She said that if he did, she would like to marry his son and would welcome a courting visit from him. The imam returned home and told one of his younger sons (he had four) to visit the young girl. The son did and spoke to her from outside her house through the window while standing on the street. During these visits, the son never saw the young girl's face because she was veiled. In two weeks, the young man's family came to ask for the daughter to marry their son. The girl's mother was unhappy because her daugh-

ter was young, but her father consented because his daughter insisted so strongly that she wanted to marry this young man. The young girl's older brother intervened on behalf of his sister's wishes against his mother's objections. During a traditional wedding ceremony and a long march from the bride's village to the groom's village, the groom never saw the face of his bride. Several people teased him about how ugly she was. Because of this teasing he worried a great deal. He thought to himself: "If she is as ugly as they say, after the wedding, I can go drown myself in a river." After the marriage ceremony concluded and upon entry into his home, he saw his wife's face for the first time. He was overcome with joy because he found her to be so beautiful. The interviewee, who was about fifty years old, told this story about her parents with great love and pride. The story was a family heirloom.

This story is not about an elopement. It is about a traditional wedding. Still, it contains all the key elements of a typical elopement. The young girl is impetuous. She is passionate. She takes an initiative. That is, she asks the visiting imam, a figure of authority with social status, if he has a son with the same handsome face as his. Her question is bold. In a way, she is choosing her spouse without actually having met him. She is attracted to the handsomeness of the imam and transfers his handsomeness to his son. After being courted, she then defies the wishes of her mother. She insists on having her way with her marriage decision. Her father complies with her desires and preferences. While a traditional wedding, the young couple, like an eloping pair, have passion and desire, and they have at best a slim acquaintance with each other.

The folklorist Alan Dundes makes the point that, while folklore reflects "the value configuration of the folk," at the same time folklore dramatizes "a sanctioned form of escape from these same values."<sup>5</sup> The hero or heroine does what is taboo or what is prohibited. Conventional norms are broken. At the same time, the taboo behavior puts the hero or heroine ahead of the game of life. They come out on top. Their marriage is a success. Happiness is achieved. This

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<sup>5</sup> Dundes, Alan. "Folklore as a Mirror of Culture" in *The Meaning of Folklore: The Analytical Essays of Alan Dundes*, ed. Simon J. Bronner (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2007), 59.

success, moreover, is connected somehow with the taboo behavior. One does what one may not do in order to have what one seeks. The success in the family folklore represents a success in real life.

Family folklore turns raw personal experiences into a family story. Telling the story heightens the drama and beauty of the event. The story is about eccentric rather than conventional behavior. The story is special to the family itself. Indeed, each family's story could serve as a script for a good movie, equal in excitement and drama to any popular film. The meaningfulness of the story is different from the meaningfulness of an ethnographic observation or an interview by an anthropologist. Family folklore reflects the bias of the storyteller. The storyteller recounts what she wants to be known and leaves out what she does not want to be known. She remembers what she wants to remember and forgets what she does not want to share. The storyteller is self-interested in this way because the story is about her and she wants to be seen and understood as the hero of her story.

The distortions in the storyteller's self image, however, reveal something about the culture in which the storyteller lives.<sup>6</sup> The stories depict the tension and courage of marrying someone with whom one has a slim acquaintance. The subjects in the story are tempting fate, as it were. The people in these events leap into the unknown, trusting that life will work out in the end. Their leap of faith accepts fate and what it brings to them. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the word for accepting fate and what it brings is *sudbina*. The term resonates closely with the French phrase, *amour fati*, which means love of fate or love of one's fate, assuming that whatever life brings, even misfortune and suffering, will be good. The stories, even if they are distortions, nevertheless still reveal clearly a general outlook on life that is commonly found within the culture.

Consider another example: A married man told the following story about his parents' marriage by elopement in Bosnia-Herzegovina in front of his wife and mother-in-law. His parents were in love and planned to elope. One evening at a prearranged time with his father, his mother left her house. She met his father in the woods nearby. Her father and brothers, however, learned of the elopement

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 53.

and opposed it. They, too, left the house and pursued the couple to stop the marriage. The walk from his mother's village to his father's village was twenty kilometers. They had to walk through thick forests and along a mountain ridge. While walking along a path, his father slipped and fell down a ravine. His mother had walked further on, turned around, and did not see his father. She was alone in the dark in the forest. She thought she had lost her new husband and was now by herself in the night, not knowing where to go. His father, though did not fall far into the ravine and climbed back up to the path where his mother was standing. They then continued along the mountain path to his father's village before his mother's father and brothers caught up with them. The story was told with zest and brought a lot of laughs from those listening.

The humor of family folklore is found in how mishaps did not become tragedies, how misunderstandings are transformed into epiphanies, and how outlaws become noble figures. Family folklore engages in caricature. It heightens and exaggerates certain characteristics of the social actors in the story. Details are exaggerated to give the story its power. Unlike an interview, whose meaningfulness is more semantic than poetic, the meaningfulness of family folklore is more poetic than semantic. For example, a poem is primarily poetic in its meaningfulness. In turn, a scientific report is primarily semantic in its meaningfulness. Semantic and poetic meanings, though, as Kenneth Burke says, are both ideals.<sup>7</sup> No text is purely one or the other. There remains a degree of semantic meaningfulness in a poem. Likewise, there is upon close reading a degree of poetic meaningfulness in the scientific report, even though it is likely unconscious or denied.<sup>8</sup> The joy in telling, hearing, and comprehending a story is in how this tension between the two ideals of meaningfulness, poetic and semantic, are interdependent. The story dramatizes the interplay between the stories' seman-

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<sup>7</sup> Burke, Kenneth. "Semantic and Poetic Meaning" in *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973), 138–67.

<sup>8</sup> Burke writes, "Poetic meanings, then, cannot be disposed of on the true-or-false basis. Rather, they are related to one another like a set of concentric circles, of wider and wider scope. Those of wider diameter do not categorically eliminate those of narrower diameter" ("Semantic and Poetic Meaning," 141).



tic and poetic meaningfulness and successfully mediates this tension.

Collecting and reporting family folklore takes something that existed and thrived in the oral culture of a family and moves it into another realm, a public realm, the realm of written culture. Family folklore is especially important in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the recent war. Many relatives were lost. Homes, where family history, resources, and time were invested, were destroyed. Neighbors and communities were lost. Family folklore, however, remains. Understandably, families may hesitate to share this valuable heritage, wanting to hold on securely to what is indeed truly and most authentically theirs. Family folklore celebrates how the past lives in the present. It connects family members and preserves their intimacy. It gives meaning to the present, a present that may be shattered and distraught after great personal loss during the past war. Family folklore is found and is significant in every human culture, but today it is especially significant and important in the lives of families living inside and outside of Bosnia-Herzegovina.



## CHAPTER 10

# Affinal Relations after Elopement

*"The story of a family can also portray the soul of a land."<sup>1</sup>*

In *The Rites of Passage*, Arnold van Gennep says that rites of passage need to be examined as ceremonial sequences.<sup>2</sup> The importance and significance of one rite of passage cannot be understood independently of another rite of passage that either precedes or follows it. Rather than focus on one rite of passage and its details in isolation from the wider life-world of the phenomenon, it is better to pay attention to the sequential relation of different rites of passage. Doing so allows the cultural anthropologist to arrive at a fuller understanding of the phenomena in relation to each other and their formative roles in the community.

Up to this point, this study has focused on one rite of passage, namely, a marriage custom, elopement. Like van Gennep, Tone Bringa recommended that it is important to understand the rite of passage within a sequence.<sup>3</sup> In the community Bringa studied, elopement was part of an ensemble, a series of rites that fit together in a sequence. Bringa points out the importance of establishing affinal relations among Bosniaks. The marriage process, she argues, is not complete until certain prescribed rituals occur after the marriage, whether the marriage was formed by elopement or a tradi-

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<sup>1</sup> Djilas, Milovan. *Land Without Justice*, introduction and notes by William Jovanovich (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1958), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Gennep, Arnold van. *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

<sup>3</sup> Bringa, Tone. *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

tional wedding. These rituals create an interconnectedness between the bride and groom's families. In an awkward way, a couple from central Bosnia commented to me that it was not unusual for them to visit their parents and find their spouse's parents already there drinking coffee. The affinal relations are not established automatically, but need to be enacted. Gift-giving during the visitations confirms the kin relationship. These relations, moreover, are established in a secular rather than religious sphere.<sup>4</sup> Religious authorities do not play a direct role in establishing these affinal relations, which instead reflect a secular or natural religiosity of the people.

Lockwood likewise stressed the importance of *prijatelji* [friends] for the ethnic identity of Bosniaks. These affinal relations, which Lockwood refers to as *prijateljstvo*, "tend to be regarded more highly than any other bond between households, including all but the closest agnatic relations."<sup>5</sup> The high regard is unexpected because marriages are often couple-initiated rather than family-initiated. Families have less say about the initiation of the marriage that is couple-initiated in contrast to the marriage that is family-initiated. Thus it is unexpected that after a couple-initiated marriage, families would make the effort—or feel obliged to make the effort—to become in-laws in a sustained way.

Consider a contrasting example from the ethnographic study of Daniel G. Bates in Turkey. Bates' observations are helpful in terms of how they contrast with Lockwood's observations in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bates writes, "Immediately following a kidnapping or elopement, relations between the households involved are extremely poor, and remain so for a long period. ... The risk of violence is great under these circumstances and has been known to flare up even at reconciliation meetings several years later."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The increasing role that religious institutions play in marriage within every ethnic community risks decreasing the occurrence of this secular custom.

<sup>5</sup> Lockwood, William G. "Converts and Consanguinity: The Social Organization of Moslem Slavs in Western Bosnia." *Ethnology* 11, no. 1 (1972): 71.

<sup>6</sup> Bates, Daniel G. "Normative and Alternative Systems of Marriage among the Yörök of Southeastern Turkey." *Anthropological Quarterly* 47, no. 3, 270–87, 280. To give another example, Bates argues that among the Yörök of Southeastern Turkey "the high incidence of kidnapping in Yörök is unrelated to any possible appreciation the Yörök might have regarding the utility of dispersed lines of

Lockwood and Bringa both find the opposite in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although sometimes reluctantly and sometimes not at all, relations between households are initiated through a series of visitations and reciprocal visitations after an elopement.

What is distinctive in Bosnia is that confirming a connection between the husband and bride's families occurs after elopement. Members of the husband's household visit the wife's family, indeed, *must* visit the wife's family as soon as possible after the elopement in order to make peace. Where Bringa did her study in central Bosnia, the affinal visits were called *pohod* [military campaign]. The groom's family, though, brings not weapons but gifts to the bride's family. In different regions the visitations have different names: *mirnost* [in peace] or *prvine* [first visit]. There is an apt phrase to describe these variations in cultural customs in Bosnia-Herzegovina, "*hiljadu sela, hiljadu običaja*" [one thousand villages, one thousand customs]. Lockwood reports the following custom during such a visitation, which appears to be a *quid pro quo* response, a sequential rite of passage, to the elopement, the initial rite of passage.

On one evening of the visit in the bride's natal home, a group of kin and neighbors attempts to hang her husband by his feet from a house beam. The girl's mother intercedes and "buys" her son-in-law (*kupiti zeta*) by paying ransom of coffee and *šerbe* to the would-be abductors. From this point on peace prevails between the two households and they are regarded as *prijatelji*.<sup>7</sup>

After the marriage is consummated, it then becomes family-sustained through ritualized affinal visitations. The ritualized visitations are what Erving Goffman calls "remedial interchanges."<sup>8</sup> They

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kinship." Lockwood makes the opposite observation in his study of Bosnian Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina: The high incidence of elopement is directly related to the appreciation Bosniaks have regarding the utility of dispersed lines of kinship.

<sup>7</sup> Lockwood, "Converts and Consanguinity," 74.

<sup>8</sup> Goffman, Erving. "Remedial Interchanges" in *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1971), 95–187. The remedial interchange is a sequence of exchanges in which a family tries to change the meaning of an action that is potentially offensive to another family through the uses of such acts as excuses, justifications, and apologies. The goal is to change the meaning of an action that is potentially offensive into something acceptable if not desirable.

are performed in order to reestablish relations that have been breached by the infraction of the elopement. The visitations endow the marriage with a socially sanctioned character. To restate Bringa's point, the marriage process is not seen as complete until *prijateljji* has been established through a series of remedial interchanges.<sup>9</sup> If a husband and wife divorce, then the *prijateljji* also sever their relations.

Bronislaw Malinowski said that the study of kinship is like "kinship algebra." Kinship can be based on either blood or marriage. Relations through blood are agnatic or consanguine relations, and relations through marriage are affinal relations. Algebra computes sets of numbers; the sets may be finite. When calculating interrelations of agnatic relatives, ego's blood line, anthropologists calculate a finite set of relatives. When calculating interrelations of affinal relatives, anthropologists calculate an infinite but still countable set. Affinal kinship is broader and more vast.

Bringa and Lockwood reported that Muslim households "display little interest in recounting long genealogies"<sup>10</sup> in contrast to Christian households, who can often count their agnatic ancestors as a finite set back ten generations.<sup>11</sup> In the village Lockwood studied, nobody could "name a forebear beyond his grandfather's generation."<sup>12</sup> To say that Bosniaks do not calculate their agnatic lineage, however, is not to say that Bosniaks lack an algebra to calculate kinship. It is rather to say that Bosniaks use a set that is more like an infinite than finite set in that they calculate affinal as well as agnatic kinships.

Marriages serve two functions in society, which anthropologists refer to as the "vertical" and "horizontal" function. The "vertical" function preserves continuity by sustaining a family's bloodline. The agnatic group is paramount and supreme; agnatic solidarity is emphasized. There is the desire to preserve the memory of the fam-

<sup>9</sup> Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way*, 135–43.

<sup>10</sup> Lockwood, "Converts and Consanguinity," 75.

<sup>11</sup> Denis Striković, an anthropologist studying the social organization of Bosniaks in Serbia shared with me that Bosniaks in Serbia count their agnatic ancestors back ten generations, something Bosniaks in Bosnia-Herzegovina do not reportedly do. In this way, Bosniaks in Serbia are more like the Orthodox in Serbia.

<sup>12</sup> Lockwood, "Converts and Consanguinity," 76.

ily's name and honor through succeeding generations of off-spring. One example of marriage that serves the "vertical" function is when the daughter marries the son of her father's brother. This marriage is often discussed in anthropological literature and said to be desirable for families in the Middle East. Such a marriage tightens the ties of the agnatic group, making it stronger.

Marriages that serve the "horizontal" function tie society together across a single generation. Relations outside one's bloodline are established, creating a wider solidarity within the society, making society less clannish and less tribal. In every kinship structure, there is each function, "verticalness" and "horizontalness," in one way or another. Eugene Hammel's study of Serbian Orthodox kinship in former Yugoslavia points out that "horizontalness" is achieved through fictive kinship or *kumstvo* within the traditional Serbian Orthodox community. Fictive kinship, a third kind of kinship, based on neither blood nor marriage, is created through specific cultural rituals, for example, drinking blood in order to mime agnatic kinship.<sup>13</sup> One latent function of fictive kinship, Hammel argues, is to cut off the development of and dependence upon affinal kin. According to Hammel, *kumstvo* carries more respect and social capital than *prijatelj*, although in the Serbian Orthodox community the term *prijatelj* is also used to name in-lawship, and affines may be close.<sup>14</sup> It is fictive kinship, or *kumstvo*, that serves the function of horizontalness and at the same time preserves the hegemony of agnatic kin. This cultural pattern in regard to kinship has, of course, significantly changed with modernization, as Hammel points out.

It is important to appreciate the findings of Lockwood and Bringa in this context. *Prijatelj* emphasize affinal solidarity. The function of "horizontalness" is emphasized more than the function of "verticalness," which is not to say that either function is absent in any kinship structure. Marriage among Bosniaks strengthens not the agnatic group vis-à-vis another agnatic group but the affinal group,

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<sup>13</sup> Hammel, Eugene. "Kumstvo as Part of a General System of Exchange" in *Alternative Social Structures and Ritual Relations in the Balkans* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969), 73–89.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

creating the opportunity, the imperative, to establish bonds between non-agnates for their own sake.<sup>15</sup> This custom was a matter of pride in the community Lockwood studied.

The preference for affinal kin over agnatic kin, in fact, harkens back to the Middle Ages. The historian David Herlihy makes the following comment.

Historians today are generally agreed that the prevailing kinship system of early medieval society, from the fall of the Roman empire to the twelfth century, was exclusively bilineal; relationships traced through women were equally important as those traced through men.<sup>16</sup>

Lockwood and Bringa's observations about the emphasis on affinal kinship among Bosnian Muslims echoes Herlihy's understanding of the kinship structure in early European medieval society. A thesis at this point is that this kinship structure that privileges affines is a remnant of the social organization that existed among the inhabitants of medieval Bosnia. Herlihy notes that kinship structure started to change in the central Middle Ages:

From the central Middle Ages (approximately the twelfth and thirteenth centuries), a new kinship system, agnatic or patrilineal in basic design, came to be superimposed upon an older system, especially a cognatic or bilineal one. Not only was the new system agnatic, but it also increasingly favored the interests of a single son, usually the eldest, over other brothers. The new system was superimposed upon the old, but did not entirely obliterate it.<sup>17</sup>

This kinship transformation in medieval Europe is played out in and parallels the different kinship structures in the Balkans. The bias for affinal relations among Bosnian Muslims contrasts with the bias for agnatic relations in Christian South Slav ethnic groups, which Herlihy argues developed later in history, in the central Middle Ages.

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<sup>15</sup> Elopements are an important component of this social system; they transgress the bonds and duties of patrilineal kin and the bonds and duties of affinal kin repair the transgression.

<sup>16</sup> Herlihy, David. "The Making of the Medieval Family: Symmetry, Structure, and Sentiment" in *Medieval Families: Perspectives on Marriage, Household, and Children*, ed. Carol Neel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 198–99.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.



This bias for agnatic kin among the Serbs in Yugoslavia is discussed in several Balkan ethnologies. In a study of traditional Serbian Orthodox weddings in Macedonia, David B. Rheubottom found that one function of the wedding or *svadba* is the negation of affinity.<sup>18</sup> Only the groom's family and kin are present at the wedding ceremony. No representatives from the bride's family are included. Once the daughter leaves her natal home with the bridal party for the groom's home, her family is no longer obliged to offer her support. The dowry the daughter receives from her family as an endowment when she marries brings closure to the family's relation to her. The Orthodox wedding in the Macedonia community Rheubottom studied clearly devalues affinity.

In his study of traditional Serbian kinship in Yugoslavia, Andrei Simić writes:

The word in Serbo-Croatian for 'affine' and 'friend' is the same—*prijate*... These relations, though of a semi-sacred nature, were nevertheless far more fragile than those within the *zadruga*, and the ties of common identification and responsibility far fewer. Thus, the fields generated by marriage... can be regarded in the moral sense as being rather weak.<sup>19</sup>

Notice that what, according to Simić, is regarded as weak in the moral sense among the Orthodox is regarded as strong in the moral sense among Muslims. Simić's formulation of the significance of *prijatelj* inverts Lockwood and Bringa's understanding of the significance of *prijatelj*. *Prijatelj* emphasize the function of "horizontalness" more than the function of "verticalness," and in the studies of Lockwood and Bringa, the strength of this kinship is that "horizontalness" is not only broader but also in an odd way higher than verticalness.

These different attitudes toward kinship, of course, have political implications for understanding ethnic relations in the Balkans. Simić writes:

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<sup>18</sup> Rheubottom, David B. "Dowry and Wedding Celebrations in Yugoslav Macedonia" in *The Meaning of Marriage Payments*, ed. John L. Comaroff (London: Academic Press, 1980).

<sup>19</sup> Simić, Andrei. *The Ethnology of Traditional and Complex Societies*, AAAS Study Guides on Contemporary Problems (Washington, DC: American Association for the Advancement of Science & National Science Foundation, 1971), 64.

From the Serbian point of view, the totality of the social universe, that is humanity in general, might be visualized as a series of such structures each composed of families and nations, and each with its own particular characteristics and ethical attributes in opposition to those of all others. Moreover, in this conceptualization ethnic identity is not an achieved or arbitrary characteristic, but rather a product of the 'natural order.' Consequently, to be a Serb is to be born into a Serbian lineage, and, thus, family membership becomes the ultimate determinant of nationality.<sup>20</sup>

Simić's comment explains the emotional strength of nationalism in Serbia as well as other countries. The moral boundary of family, which is naturally strong and personally compelling, is projected onto the nation. There is a transference. The moral understanding of the family becomes the moral understanding of the nation. Ethnic identity is less achieved and more ascribed in the same way that descent lineage is ascribed. According to Simić, for the Serbian national identity ascription is more significant and achievement less significant. According to Lockwood and Bringa, for Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, ascription is less significant and achievement more significant.

Simić's work thus provides the background context for the following comment that Bringa makes regarding the Bosniak's self-understanding of kinship structure. Bringa writes, "(Among Bosnian Muslims, however, it is ultimately 'morality,' and not 'blood' which binds people together in a collectivity.)"<sup>21</sup> Bringa herself puts the comment in parenthesis. It is important to unpack what the statement means. The statement merges two different dichotomies.

<sup>20</sup> Simić, Andrei. "Obstacles to the Development of a Yugoslav National Consciousness: Ethnic Identity and Folk Culture in the Balkans." *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 1 (1991): 30. The Serbian philosopher Radomir Konstantinović critiques this notion of Serbian ethnic identity qua nationalism in *Filosofija palanke*. See Konstantinović's recent essay, translated into English, "The Palanka Philosophy: Revisiting Sarajevo" where he writes, "Nationalism has become the absolute evil in this region. It has bore holes in the minds of everything and everyone. When nationalism tells you that it fails to understand you, simply because it speaks a different language—know that it can understand you perfectly—then it transforms into a man who wishes not to understand you" (*Spirit of Bosnia* 8, no. 4 [2013]). Retrieved January 6, 2014 at <http://www.spiritofbosnia.org/current-issue/the-palanka-philosophy-revisiting-sarajevo/>.

<sup>21</sup> Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way*, 147.

First, there is dichotomy between affinal relations, *prijatelj*, and agnatic relations, *bratstvo*. Since blood references agnatic kinship, affinal kinship becomes the contrasting side. Then, there is the dichotomy between morality and amorality. Rather than pair affinal kinship with blood, Bringa inserts morality. Can one type of kinship structure be said to be moral and another not? Is kinship moral when it follows a “horizontal” function more than a “vertical” function? Is kinship moral when it follows a “vertical” more than a “horizontal” function? Respecting the empirical principle of cultural relativism, one cannot say that one type of kinship is moral and another is not.

At the same time, Saint Peter Damian, as reported by Herlihy, answers the question of how Bosnian Muslims would understand the preference for affinal kinship as inherently moral and, interestingly enough, from the perspective of Christian theology in the Middle Ages.

We can take as a convenient point of departure a treatise entitled “On Degrees of Kinship,” which was written about 1063 by the Italian reformer and saint Peter Damian. ... All human beings, he reminds his readers, are descendants of the same first parents, Adam and Eve, and all are therefore members of the same descent group—a *genus cognationis* in his phrase. Human beings, unlike animals, have only a single pair of first parents; this should remind us all that we are in fact brothers or sisters, members of the same kin group. Over time, however, the lines of descent (*progenies* in Peter’s technical terminology) grow apart. As the distance separating them increases, their mutual love cools and expires. This dispersion of the strands stemming from common ancestors extinguishes love and undermines social peace. Descent groups then become inclined to fight against their estranged neighbors. Here marriage performs its essential service to society. “When blood relationship,” Peter explains, “along with the terms that designate it, expires, the law of marriage takes up the function, and reestablishes the rights of ancient love among new men.” In other words, when consanguinity fails, marriage intervenes, in defense of social peace. Marriage is not simply the union of two persons; rather, it binds together two kin groups. It reunites human society, which time and the divergence of family lines relentlessly pull asunder.<sup>22</sup>

Damian says that in truth humanity consists of one descent group, where all of humanity are descendants of the same parents, Adam

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<sup>22</sup> Herlihy, “The Making of the Medieval Family,” 199–200.

and Eve. The function of marriage is to curtail divisions that are created when descent groups develop and compete, in order to return society to the one kin group called humanity. In this way, marriage defends peace. According to Damian, kinship that follows a horizontal rather than a vertical line is more pious, more moral.

The Austrian Kosta Hörmann believed that Bosnian Muslims are the descendants of medieval Bosnians, who after the invasion of Bosnia by the Ottoman Turks left the Bosnian Church and embraced Islamic religion. Hörmann argues that medieval Bosnians embraced Islam without forgetting their native customs, cultural heritage, or collective identity as Bosnians. Bosnian Muslims simply adapted their customs, heritage, and identity to their new religion.<sup>23</sup>

Given the kinship structure in early medieval Europe as described by historians, one thesis that arises here is that Bosnians, while converting to Islam over the course of time after the Ottoman invasion, maintained the emphasis on affinal relations. This thesis has not only historical, but also sociological and anthropological import. The thesis is not just about the past, but also about the present. The emphasis on affinal relations becomes something that is not mythological and fanciful in character but a living remnant of a distinctive cultural heritage in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the following chapter, we will consider the matter from another angle and ask to what degree the values articulated in the kinship theology of Damian are exemplified in the in-lawship *prijatelji*, turning to the subject of Bosnia's kin in Turkey and the cultural customs they carried with them.

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<sup>23</sup> These points about Kosta Hörmann draw upon Bojan Baskar's essay, "Komšiluk and Taking Care of the Neighbor's Shrine in Bosnia-Herzegovina" in *Sharing Sacred Spaces in the Mediterranean*, eds. Dionigi Albera and Maria Courocli (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 51–68.

## CHAPTER 11

# Bosnia's Kin in Turkey

*"The family is part of the larger society and must be integrated in it. The basic point of reference for analyzing the structure of the society is this institutionalized societal value system."<sup>1</sup>*

On the Asian side of Istanbul in a section of the city called Pendik is an area populated by a large number of Bosniaks; the population in this area is estimated to be 90,000. On the main street approaching the five-block neighborhood stands a restaurant called Mostar Restoran. Covering the restaurant's front wall is a wall-size picture of Stari Most, the recently rebuilt bridge in Mostar. Further on the street is a bakery that serves *burek* and *pita*, traditional Bosnian foods. Inside the bakery are attractive photos of the Sebilj, a wooden fountain in Baščaršija, Sarajevo's Ottoman bazaar, and the famous *tekke* or Dervish house in Blagaj near Mostar. Several restaurants serve *ćevapčići*, a popular sausage in Bosnia. In a community center, on the third floor (a fourth floor is being constructed on top of the center, which is already the tallest building in the area), is a large hall with a café where men play chess. In one corner of the hall is a modest museum with mannequins wearing traditional Bosniak costumes. On the corner walls are black and white pictures of people doing crafts or danc-

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<sup>1</sup> Parsons, Talcott. "The Organization of Personality as a System of Action" in *Family, Socialization, and Interaction Process*, eds. Talcott Parsons and Robert F. Bales (New York: Free Press, 1955), 158. A previous version of this chapter was presented at the International Conference on Education, Culture, and Identity at the International University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, July 2013.

ing in *kolo* (a South Slav circle dance) in addition to various cultural artifacts. On weekends, children study their parents' mother-tongue in the center. The Bosniak ethnic identity is sustained in this area of Pendik in Istanbul, Turkey. The strength of this community effort to maintain a sense of ethnic solidarity, however, is not necessarily typical of other Bosniak areas in Turkey.

I visited the area in 2013 and talked with people in cafés and the community center. When I approached people and asked whether they spoke Bosnian, having learned this word for the language in Sarajevo, they answered no. They replied that they spoke Serbian. Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian were formerly known as one language, Serbo-Croatian, in former Yugoslavia. I asked whether they had ever lived in Bosnia, and they answered no. I asked whether they still had relatives in Bosnia, and some answered yes. Many had lived in Turkey longer than fifty years and spoke Serbian in their homes. Only a few had visited Bosnia. The people I talked with were actually from Novi Pazar in Sandžak, a region in Serbia. Still, the prominent pictures on display in Pendik were from Bosnia—well-known locales in Bosnia—not Sandžak. The symbols of ethnic identity for Bosniaks in Turkey, who are originally from Serbia rather than Bosnia, originate from Bosnia.

Sandžak and Bosnia-Herzegovina were closely connected parts of the Ottoman Empire for centuries. When Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908, Sandžak remained a part of the Ottomans and Bosnia-Herzegovina became a part of Austria-Hungary. This took place in order to appease the Ottomans after Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>2</sup> At this point, Sandžak followed a different course and cultural fate than Bosnia-Herzegovina, becoming a part of Serbia and Montenegro. Sandžak and Bosnia-Herzegovina, however, remained interconnected culturally and socially.

Besides possessing material culture representing Bosnia, Bosniaks in Pendik maintain social customs. One custom is the establishment of affinal relations after marriage discussed in the previous chapter. The

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<sup>2</sup> Andrejevich, Milan. "The Sandžak: A Perspective of Serb-Muslim Relations" in *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State*, eds. Hugh Poulton and Suha Taji-Farouki (Washington Square: New York University Press, 1997), 170–213.

in-lawship is also called *prijateljji*, which means friends, but names in-lawship or affinity. When I asked people I met and talked with in Pendik about *prijateljji* and its importance, they smiled warmly. People spoke of their *snaha* (daughter-in-law), *zet* (son-in-law), *svekar* (wife's father-in-law), *svekrva* (wife's mother-in-law), *punac* (husband's father-in-law), or *punica* (husband's mother-in-law). These "Serbo-Croatian" words for affinal relations were immediately recognized and understood. When sitting in a street café I asked an elder Bosniak man what it was like to be both *svekar* and *punac*, two different words for father-in-law, having both a married daughter and a married son. He replied with a smirk that he was always being asked for money. These in-law relations are part of the tapestry of Bosniak family life in Pendik. People said that in-law visitations occur in their close-knit community on a weekly basis. The kinship custom is important to the identity of Bosniaks in Turkey, more important than the public displays of cultural images from Bosnia.

As mentioned, in *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way*, Tone Bringa describes the social importance of affinal relations among Bosniaks. She says that the marriage process is not complete until certain prescribed rituals occur after marriage.<sup>3</sup> The rituals create an interconnectedness between the bride and groom's families. The in-lawships cannot be established automatically, but need to be enacted.

It is noteworthy that many Bosniaks in Turkey maintain this cultural custom. The marriage custom reflects their heritage as an ethnic group. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, there are less than two million Bosniaks. In Turkey, it is estimated that there are five million. As explained by Milan Andrejevich, this population may include South Slav Muslims from Bulgaria or other republics of former Yugoslavia, all having immigrated during various difficult historical periods in the past one hundred years to Turkey. In Turkey, there are twice, maybe three times, as many Bosniaks as there are in Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>4</sup> One informant in a community center in Bursa, Tur-

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<sup>3</sup> Bringa, Tone. *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 135–43.

<sup>4</sup> For a critical discussion of these numbers, see Cagaptay, Soner. *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?* (London: Routledge, 2006).

key told me that there were twelve million Bosniaks in Turkey, but there is no way to check this statement. The belief, while an opinion, exists among some members of the Bosniak community in Turkey.

It is important to identify how Bosniaks in Turkey maintain their ethnic uniqueness in the context of Turkey's national culture. In Turkey, affinal relations are established, but they are initiated and developed before rather than after marriage.<sup>5</sup> In Turkey, both the wife and the husband's families are involved in the pre-wedding events even if the marriage is not arranged in the traditional way. A set of pre-marital events characterizes marriages. The first event is called *kız isteme*; the groom's family goes and visits the bride's family to ask for the hand of the family's daughter in marriage. The visit formalizes the couple's situation, and the bride's family often anticipates the visit. The second event is called *söz kesme*; this is a private ceremony that involves family members on both sides. An elder figure in the community gives a short speech and puts rings on the fingers of the future bride and groom. The third event is called *nişan*, an engagement party, a public gathering, where it is announced publicly that the couple is engaged. The rings put on at the previous event are replaced with new and different rings.<sup>6</sup> The final event is the wedding, called *düğün*. In order "to carry the couple's relationship to its culmination in marriage," the families of the bride and groom are brought into the marriage process before rather than after the wedding.<sup>7</sup>

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, engagement parties, called *vjeridba*, also occur, but they occur less frequently and are not a national custom as they are in Turkey. In the survey conducted by Mareco Index Bosnia, the percent of female Bosniaks having an engagement party was 37.2%, the percentage of female Bosnian Serbs 38.9%, and the percentage of female Bosnian Croats 61.5% (see

<sup>5</sup> See Delaney, Carol. *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991) and Stirling, Paul. *Turkish Village* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1965).

<sup>6</sup> Orhan Pamuk's novel, *The Museum of Innocence*, dramatizes the public character of *nişan*, an event as momentous and, in this case, painful as the wedding.

<sup>7</sup> Tekçe, Belgin. "Paths of Marriage in Istanbul: Arranging Choices and Choice in Arrangements." *Ethnography* 5, no. 2 (2004): 184.



Table 11.1). Engagement parties were reported less frequently among both Bosniaks and Bosnian Serbs than Bosnian Catholics.

**Table 11.1. Engagement party (*vjeridba*) of women in Bosnia-Herzegovina by nationality**

|                  |     | Nationality |         |       |           |
|------------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------|-----------|
|                  |     | Croat       | Bosniak | Serb  | Row Total |
| Engagement party | Yes | 61.5%       | 37.2%   | 38.9% | 45.2%     |

Source: Mareco Index Bosnia, Sarajevo, September 2013.

A chi-square test was performed to examine the relation between engagement party and nationality. The relation between these variables was statistically significant,  $X^2(2, n=985)=46.03, p < .001$

What is unique in Bosnia-Herzegovina is that confirming a connection between the bride and groom's families occurs after marriage. As mentioned, where Bringa did her study, affinal visits were called *pohod*. The groom's family brings gifts to the bride's family. Words for these visitations in other regions are *mirnost* [in peace] or *prvine* [first visit]. Bosniaks in Pendik reported that they follow variations of these customs. They distinguished these visits with two different names: *Prvice* [first visit], which refers to when a husband's family visits the bride's family, usually within one week after the wedding, and *povratak* [return visit], which refers to when the bride's family makes a reciprocal visit after receiving a visit from the groom's family.

Within the Turkish national culture, there do not appear to be specific customs to strengthen affinal relations after the wedding has occurred. In *Istanbul Households: Marriage, Family, and Fertility, 1880–1940*, Alan Duden and Cem Behar point out that social arrangements for betrothal and marriage are conducted by families. While the groom and bride's families remain connected to the couple after the marriage, they themselves do not connect in any ritualized manner.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Duden, Alan, and Cem Behar. *Istanbul Households: Marriage, Family, and Fertility, 1880–1940* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

A recent study of marriage in Turkey examines the first year of marriage and compares family-initiated marriages to couple-initiated marriages. The study makes the following observations: couples in couple-initiated marriages are closer to the wife's family, men in family-initiated marriages are more involved with their natal families, and women in couple-initiated marriages interact more often with their own families.<sup>9</sup> There is no mention of interactions between the husband and wife's families after the marriage, although such interactions may occur.

Bosniaks in Pendik indicated that they follow both the Turkish and the Bosniak customs, organizing engagement parties before the wedding and making in-law visitations after the wedding. Bosniaks are assimilated into the national Turkish culture and at the same time (at least in Pendik) retain their ethnic distinctiveness. In a paradoxical way, the more Bosniaks assimilate into the Turkish culture, the more they retain their ethnic customs. Bosniaks do not sacrifice their ethnic distinctiveness. At the same time, Bosniaks, as South Slav Muslims, are enmeshed in the Turkish culture perhaps more so than other non-Turkish ethnic groups. Bosniaks are thus not framed as "Other" within the Turkish society in contrast to, say, the Kurds. When in the Bosniak civic center, I pressed an older man about his Bosniak heritage. He raised his eyebrows at me, lifted his head high, took out his wallet, and showed me his veteran's card, saying to me that he fought in Cyprus as a Turkish soldier. Despite participation and membership in surrounding cultures and the broader Turkish society, the discrete category of an ethnic identity is maintained. Cultural differences persist despite inter-ethnic contact and interdependence.<sup>10</sup>

In Turkey, both families are deeply involved in arranging the wedding. This is true in rural and urban communities, traditional and modern settings. Within the Turkish culture, betrothal rituals endow the marriage with its moral character. The non-involvement

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<sup>9</sup> Hortaçsu, Nuran. "The First Year of Family- and Couple-Initiated Marriages of a Turkish Sample: A Longitudinal Investigation." *International Journal of Psychology* 34 (1999).

<sup>10</sup> Barth, Fredrik. "Introduction" in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, ed. Fredrik Barth (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 9–38.

of one side of a couple's family in the betrothal process, Belgin Tekçe says, is a hurt that "lingers a long time after the marriage has taken place."<sup>11</sup>

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the situation is different. The betrothal process is couple-initiated, which, from the traditional viewpoint of the Turkish national culture, is deviant. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, however, after the marriage is consummated, the marriage becomes family-sustained, as Bringa and Lockwood point out, through ritualized affine visitations. It is these visitations that endow the marriage with its moral character in Bosnia-Herzegovina. As Bringa points out, the marriage process is not seen as truly complete until *prijatelj* has been established. Marriage strengthens not the agnatic group vis-à-vis another agnatic group, but the affinal group, creating the opportunity, the imperative, to establish bonds between non-agnates for their own sake. In the next chapter, we will look more closely at this kinship structure comparing it to the kinship structures of South Slav Christians as studied historically in Balkan ethnology.

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<sup>11</sup> Tekçe, "Paths of Marriage in Istanbul," 184.



## CHAPTER 12

# Balkan Ethnology

*“The point to be made here is that social organization of the Bosnian Muslims—and by extension Bosnian Muslim society and culture as a whole—is not Turkish, nor South Slav Christian, nor even some intermediate form. Elements from both contributing sources were integrated, in line with the unique history of the Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to create something new and distinctive.”<sup>1</sup>*

The questions that William G. Lockwood raises in his ethnographic work in the seventies include: What is the social organization of Bosnian Muslims? How does the social organization of Bosnian Muslims compare with South Slav Christians? And how does the social organization of Bosnian Muslims compare with Turks? Lockwood identifies a kinship pattern that seems paradoxical. First, he states that “Muslim peasants of Bosnia give much less emphasis to patrilineality and to groups based on patrilineal kinship than do either the Croats or (especially) the Serbs.”<sup>2</sup> In this way, the social organization of Bosnian Muslims is distinct from South Slav Christians. Lockwood supports this point with the following observation:

Since patrilineal kinship provides a charter for social relations, it is typical for both Croatian and Serbian peasants to be able to recite from ten to fourteen generations of their genealogy. Bosnian Muslims, on the other hand, can al-

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<sup>1</sup> Donia, Robert, and William G. Lockwood. “The Bosnian Muslims: Class, Ethnicity, and Political Behavior in a European State” in *Muslim-Christian Conflicts: Economic, Political, and Social Origins*, eds. Suad Joseph and Barbara L. K. Pillsbury (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978), 201.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

most never provide anything beyond their own grandparents' generation and are usually very hazy about this.<sup>3</sup>

Then, Lockwood states that "Bosnian Muslim peasants also give less emphasis to patrilineality than do Turkish peasants."<sup>4</sup> While sharing the same faith, Bosnian Muslim peasants are less like Turkish peasants. While not sharing the same faith, South Slav Christian peasants are more like Turkish peasants. "Among both Turks and Serbs, then, segmentary systems of groups based on agnatic kinship have considerable importance. ... In both Turkey and Serbia, this system is important in the regulation of marriage, or at least in the formation of normative patterns of spouse selection."<sup>5</sup> South Slav Christians and Turks share an agnatic kinship structure that defines family and community, but there is also a difference. "Serbs must marry outside of the maximal agnatic group; Turks prefer to marry within."<sup>6</sup>

After describing this kinship pattern, Lockwood says that the social organization of Bosnian Muslims is more than an intermediate form. The social organization of Bosniaks is not understood in an additive fashion, nor is it understood as a matter of synthesis. It does not reflect a process of cultural syncretism, nor is it something that is derivative. To explain how the paradox is resolved, in an essay co-authored with Robert Donia, Lockwood writes that, "The slack seems to be taken up by an increased emphasis on affinal relations."<sup>7</sup> How this "slack" not only seems to be but, in fact, *is* taken up is a subject of this study.

One function of elopement is that it broadens a family's affinal kin. While a household might not have voluntarily chosen to be related to another, it does so after an elopement, partly for the sake of their children and partly for the sake of their collective identity. Agnatic kinship gives way to affinal kinship. Thus elopement serves as a forceful catalyst to an important social practice.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 201.

<sup>5</sup> Lockwood, William G. "Converts and Consanguinity: The Social Organization of Moslem Slavs in Western Bosnia." *Ethnology* 11, no. 1 (1972): 76.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Historically, however, Balkan ethnology has ignored this particularity of Bosnian Muslims' social organization. Because of misleading or inadequate education or because of conflicting political agendas, whether local or international, this particular heritage is overlooked. The omission occurs in both political and scholarly discussions.<sup>8</sup> It is worthwhile surveying this omission in the literature. In a recent essay, Karl Kaser revisits the ethnographic representations of the Balkans by two important figures: the cultural geographer Jovan Cvijić (1865–1927) and the sociologist Dinko Tomašić (1902–1975).<sup>9</sup> Cvijić and Tomašić construct different pictures of the Balkans. Cvijić's fieldwork has a strong South Slavic-Serbian orientation, while Tomašić's orientation is Croatian. The work of each assumes the position of "other" for the other, forming a sharp dichotomy. What is framed as positive by one is framed as negative by the other.

At the same time, Tomašić and Cvijić each analyze the importance of the *zadruga*, a traditional communal family structure for kinship relations and ethnic identity in the Balkans. Kaser notes that "The *zadruga* society did not favour strengthening kinship ties within the community as this might have jeopardized the basis of the *zadruga* system."<sup>10</sup> To give one example, speaking of the *zadruga* society and its impact on social personality in the Balkans, Tomašić makes the following comment:

The *zadruga* was economically and emotionally a self-sustaining community. It consisted of a group of families averaging all together between forty and fifty members. They occupied a large common house—*družinska hiža*—and a number of individual dwellings—*komore*—and other buildings placed close together. ... The *zadruga* provided for everyone, there was relatively little private property and the question of dowry had not as yet become significant. There were often cases of intermarriage within the same *zadruga*, mostly because many *zadruga* girls preferred to marry boys of their own *zadruga*. Also parents who had only girls liked at least one to marry within their own *zadruga*.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See Friedman, Francine. *The Bosnian Muslims: Denial of a Nation* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).

<sup>9</sup> Kaser, Karl. "Anthropology and the Balkanization of the Balkans: Jovan Cvijić and Dinko Tomašić." *Ethnologia Balkanica* 2 (1998): 89–99.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>11</sup> Tomašić, Dinko. "Personality Development in the Zadruga Society." *Psychiatry* 5 (1942): 299–30.

Tomašić accounts for the *zadruga* society as an ideal type. Although the *zadruga* disintegrated in Yugoslavia over the course of modernization and industrialization, the *zadruga* as an ideal type continued to influence how scholars formulated and understood ethnic identity and community in the Balkans.<sup>12</sup> It served heuristic purposes as a Weberian ideal type.

Cvijić adapts a similar approach. For Cvijić, the *zadruga* society is both imaginary and real, mythological and historical. The Dinaric mountains are the frontier between Dalmatia and Bosnia. Focusing on the Dinaric area as if populated by one race, South Slavs, Cvijić writes:

Among the Dinaric peoples, the amount of attention paid to very distant ancestors is specially great because of the “Zadruga system,” brotherhoods and tribal organizations. ... Love of actual blood relations is not enough, and so we find the institutions of “pobratimstvo” and “posestrimstvo” in which people outside the family take oaths of adoption as brothers and sisters.<sup>13</sup>

*Pobratimstvo* [ritual brotherhood] and *posestrimstvo* [ritual sisterhood] establish fictive kinship with non-agnatic kin that become tantamount to agnatic kin. As discussed, the fictive kinship assumes moral significance within the social organization of the Serbian family, and blood kinship remains paramount.<sup>14</sup>

Cvijić does hint that there are contrasting customs in the following comment:

The strongest love of all is that of a sister for her brother, and many national ballads give a delicate picture of this “sisterly love.” Except for love of her parents, this is the only kind of love that a Dinaric woman may express, and,

<sup>12</sup> Max Weber writes, “...it is necessary for the sociologist to formulate pure ideal types of the corresponding forms of action which in each case involve the highest possible degree of logical integration by virtue of their complete adequacy on the level of meaning.” According to Weber, sociological explanation cannot occur without the use of pure ideal types. Weber, Max. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 110.

<sup>13</sup> Cvijić, Jovan. “Studies in Yugoslav Psychology (I).” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 9, no. 26 (1930): 380.

<sup>14</sup> See the studies of Karl Kaser on this subject in *Patriarchy after Patriarchy: Gender Relations in Turkey and in the Balkans, 1500–2000* (Wien: Lit Verlag, 2008).



indeed, certain poems would lead one to suppose that it is even stronger than her love for her husband. ... The one exception to the above are the Bosnian love songs, but they are really Eastern and are based upon Eastern themes.<sup>15</sup>

The Bosnian love songs, the one exception, are called *sevdalinke*. While Turkish culture influences these Bosnian love songs, so do both the Sephardic culture from the Sephardic Jews, who migrated to Bosnia-Herzegovina from Spain in the fourteenth century, and European culture. *Sevdalinke* are folk music that originates in Bosnia-Herzegovina, reflecting a particular cultural heritage native to Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is misleading to label them as Eastern.

Neither Tomašić nor Cvijić considers the social organization and kinship structure of Bosnian Muslims in their works on Balkan ethnology. Their writings overlook the cultural practice that emphasizes affinal kinship, a custom later observed and described in the ethnographic studies of Lockwood and Bringa. Kaser summarizes the significance of Tomašić and Cvijić's findings this way: "In the *zadruga* the highest moral level of solidarity, sympathy, and emotional warmth could be reached."<sup>16</sup> Lockwood and Bringa find a different pattern. Among Muslims in Bosnia, the highest moral level of solidarity, sympathy, and emotional warmth is found in the relation called *prijatelji*. The kinship structure is not only "other" to the historical works in Balkan ethnology but invisible. Drawing attention to what Balkan ethnology has historically ignored, Lockwood writes, "Affined relations establish the primary social links between members of different Muslim communities, achieving even greater significance (in lieu of emphasis on patrilineal and fictive kinship) than among Bosnian Christians."<sup>17</sup> In the works of Cvijić and Tomašić, this cultural difference that Muslims in Bosnia represent is ignored.

In the anthropological works of Andrei Simić and Tone Bringa, there is another tacit polemic to be noted. What is framed as positive by one cultural anthropologist is framed as negative by the other. As mentioned, Bringa asserts a positive correlation between

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<sup>15</sup> Cvijić, "Studies in Yugoslav Psychology," 381.

<sup>16</sup> Kaser, "Anthropology and the Balkanization of the Balkans," 92.

<sup>17</sup> Lockwood, William G. "Bosnia" in *Muslim Peoples: A World Ethnographic Survey*, ed. Richard V. Weeks (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984), 114.

morality and affinal kinship. In his work on Yugoslav Serbs, Simić asserts a positive correlation between morality and agnatic kinship. Simić inverts Bringa's statement. Simić writes:

One way that the relationship between kinship and ethnicity can be conceptualized is as a series of concentric circles, the innermost of which is the nuclear family, and the outermost the nations whose circumference defines the final limits of moral obligation. From the Serbian point of view the totality of the social universe, that is humanity in general, might be visualized as a series of such structures each composed of families and nations, and each with its own particular characteristics and ethical attributes in opposition to those of all others. Moreover, in this conceptualization ethnic identity is not an achieved or arbitrary characteristic, but rather a produce of the 'natural order.' Consequently, to be a Serb is to be born into a Serbian lineage, and, thus, family membership becomes the ultimate determinant of nationality.<sup>18</sup>

To make the argument clearer, Simić references the work of Lorraine Barić. Yugoslav kinship, Barić points out, contains an element of "ascription" and "achievement" much as all kinship structures contain a degree of "verticalness" and "horizontalness."<sup>19</sup> Agnatic kinship is ascribed. Affinal kinship is achieved. Agnatic kinship is vertical. Affinal kinship is horizontal. Simić writes, "In the case of the traditional *zadruga*, the quality of ascription plays the largest part, and here, one's social identity is determined principally by accident of birth and the reputation of his household and kinship group in the outside world."<sup>20</sup>

Bringa and Simić are describing the moral fields of the ethnic communities they studied and how these moral fields represent the values that define ethnic identity and community. The difference in their accounts is that for Simić the moral field for Serbs as an ethnic community is based primarily on ascriptive characteristics and for Bringa the moral field for Bosnian Muslims as an ethnic commu-

<sup>18</sup> Simić, Andrei. "Obstacles to the Development of a Yugoslav National Consciousness: Ethnic Identity and Folk Culture in the Balkans." *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 1 (1991): 30.

<sup>19</sup> Simić, Andrei. "The Ethnology of Traditional and Complex Societies" in *AAAS Study Guides on Contemporary Problems: A Part of the NSF Chautauqua-Type Short Courses for College Teachers Program* (Washington, DC: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1975), 69.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

nity is based primarily on achieved characteristics. Every kinship structure, however, involves elements of ascription and achievement, lines of verticalness and horizontalness. Such is the dialectical nature of social life. Over the course of time, the kinship relation called *prijatelj* becomes not only achieved but ascribed. Lockwood writes, "*Prijateljstvo* is an inherited relationship in Bosnia; grandchildren of families thus linked continue to recognize the bond and to utilize it in an ongoing series of reciprocity."<sup>21</sup> Affinal relations become a family inheritance. Bringa explains the dialectic the following way: "Although Bosnian Muslims conceptualize their common identity primarily through the knowledge that they share a particular moral environment, this moral environment has been shaped by the experience and common knowledge of generations of Bosnian Muslims."<sup>22</sup> As affinal relations are renewed and sustained over time, they assume an ascribed status.

To make the same point from the other side, in the social organization of South Slav Serbs the fictive kinship *kumstvo* with non-agnatic kin has a clearly achieved rather than ascribed character. *Kumstvo* extends social relations from the agnatic family into the broader community, and these relations take on moral weight. The fictive kinship *kumstvo* serves the social organization of South Slav Serbs much as the affinal kinship *prijatelj* serves the social organization of Bosnian Muslims. *Kumstvo* and *prijatelj* are achieved kinship relations; they serve the horizontal rather than the vertical function in the social organization of the family.

Eugene Hammel points out that while *prijatelj* can be close in the Serbian family, *kumstvo* holds more moral capital and respect and can even be used to limit relations with *prijatelj*. "The ritual behavior often required toward *kumovi* simply cannot be extended toward affines, or that toward affines to *kumovi*. ... It is worth noting that families will use *kumstvo* ... establishing a *kumstvo* relationship where none existed before to block the creation of an affinal tie."<sup>23</sup> Fictive kinship, which is an achieved kinship, thus, as-

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<sup>21</sup> Lockwood, "Converts and Consanguinity," 75–76.

<sup>22</sup> Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way*, 32.

<sup>23</sup> Hammel, Eugene A. *Alternative Social Structures and Ritual Relations in the Balkans* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), 87.

sumes over the course of time an ascribed character. The following anecdote from Hammel illustrates this point all too dramatically:

One informant related an occurrence near Novi Sad, in the Vojvodina, involving two Herzegovinian families who had emigrated to the area. A boy from one and a girl from the other were preparing for marriage when someone recalled that the patriline of one, in the home land, had been *kum* to the patriline of the other, or at least that of a distant agnate of one had been *kum* to a distant agnate of the other. The proposed marriage was canonically legal, and the local priest had nothing against it. He gave his explicit permission, but gossip was rife; the young couple finally threw themselves under a passing train.<sup>24</sup>

In this account, a fictive kinship established through *kum* [godfather] assumes an impregnable ascribed character, making a proposed marriage equivalent to incest and resulting in the young couple's suicide. The moral weight of kinship becomes decisive in human lives. In the next chapter, we will look more closely at the morality of the people, its character, and its significance for society, drawing upon the work of Antonio Gramsci on folklore.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 86.

## CHAPTER 13

# Bosnian Folk

*"The impossible solution is the infinite unguaranteed patience to learn from below..."*<sup>1</sup>

I was told a story about a wealthy family in Sarajevo whose daughter recently married. The family was of the elite class, aristocrats in a way. Their daughter married a man from a rural area. The day after the marriage, his family came to visit them with gifts of sugar and coffee. The well-to-do family was taken by surprise, not knowing for sure what to do or what the visit meant. For their son-in-law's family, however, the visitation was more than a polite visit. The visit was expected. Their visit showed respect and initiated the process of developing their new affinal relationship. For the groom's family, it would have been a shame if they had not visited shortly after the marriage.

Long-time urban dwellers in Bosnia generally do not know much about the marriage customs and kinship rituals in the remote areas of Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>2</sup> When questions about these marriage customs are raised, people in Sarajevo dismiss the subject with statements like "Nobody does that anymore" or "That is something from the past." It is then pointed out that modernization, industrialization, and Yugoslav communism erased these customs that are a fading remnant of the past. Moreover, many inhabitants in

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<sup>1</sup> Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 217.

<sup>2</sup> This situation is changing in that after the war people who had lived in rural areas now inhabit urban areas. A high percentage of the people living in Sarajevo had not lived there before the war and are not originally from Sarajevo.

rural areas migrated and settled in urban areas for work and a new life.

I saw this bias in a faint way while interviewing Bosniaks living in St. Louis, Missouri with a translator from a large town. During the interview, the translator sometimes did not understand what the interviewees were telling him although he understood their words. He expressed surprise and asked the interviewee to repeat what was said and explain words he did not recognize. For example, a woman used the word, *budžak*, meaning corner, to explain a particular custom from her grandmother's marriage. The word describes a ritual a bride would follow when moving to her husband's home as his new wife. Upon entering his parent's home she would sit in a corner, veiled and silent, while neighbors came to visit. Neighbors would look at her and even talk about her while she stood and remained silent.<sup>3</sup> The translator had never heard of this custom and asked questions to understand the custom better. He was from an educated family in a major town in Bosnia and was incredulous when he heard of this marriage ritual for the first time.

Bosniaks in Bosnia are not homogenous, as the writing of the Yugoslav ethnographer, Milenko S. Filipović, makes clear.<sup>4</sup> There are class differences within the ethnic group, reflective of the traditional caste divisions from the Ottoman time. The highest caste was composed of *begs* or *begovi*. They were the landowners of large estates holding immense wealth. A second caste was made up of *aghas* or small landowners who often resided in urban areas. The third caste consisted of ordinary laborers or serfs who, like Christian peasants, inhabited and worked the lands. The largest caste was the last; the smallest, the *begs*.

Filipović reports that among the *begs* caste endogamy, marrying within a specific group, was strictly observed and first-cousin marriages sometimes occurred.<sup>5</sup> One reason for these marriages is that

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<sup>3</sup> Bringa, Tone. *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 129.

<sup>4</sup> Filipović, Milenko S. "Marriage between First Cousins Among Serbo-Croatian Speaking Moslems" in *Among the People: Native Yugoslav Ethnography: Selected Writings of Milenko S. Filipović*, ed. E. A. Hammel et al. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1982), 149–57.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 150–51.

they preserved the family's inheritance involving large estates. Moreover, like a pattern found in the Middle East, a desirable marriage was when a son married the daughter of his uncle.<sup>6</sup> This pattern, however, Filipović observed, is taboo among the broader Bosniak ethnic group. Filipović reports that Bosniaks in the lower caste strongly condemned such marriages believing that "illness, difficult births, and other evils come from them."<sup>7</sup> While the members of the lower caste knew that Islamic law permitted such marriages, there was still a cultural taboo against them. The rubric that the lowest caste followed as best as it could after consulting with an elder's memory of kin relations was that one cannot marry even one's ninth cousin. As one informant told Filipović, "the ninth branch is the heaviest one."<sup>8</sup> Among the lower caste, family exogamy was the rule. Scorn would be heaped upon someone who married another who was closely related. Lockwood and Bringa report similar sentiments and practices in the villages where they did their ethnographic work in the seventies and eighties.

Antonio Gramsci uses the term subaltern to refer to a society's peasants.<sup>9</sup> In line with orthodox Marxism, Gramsci thought that the subaltern needed education and political emancipation from their folk ways, but against orthodox Marxism he thought that the folk's cultural practices needed to be understood and taken seriously. Gramsci resisted the ultramodern view that refused to address the social and political significance of the pre-capitalist peasants living in the industrial period who had not yet entered the working class or merged with the proletariat. This strata of society represented a remnant of a feudal period before industrialization. The classical Marxist position insisted on developing the class consciousness of the working class, the class which represented the future of society in the Marxist paradigm. Among the educated and political elite in former Yugoslavia a bias against the subaltern existed, and it ex-

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<sup>6</sup> See Delaney, Carol. *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), 100–07.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>9</sup> Gramsci, Antonio. "Observations on Folklore" in *International Folkloristics: Classic Contributions by the Founders of Folklore*, ed. Alan Dundes (Landham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999), 131–37.

isted independently of political conviction. At the end of Tito's socialism, the bias remained. Gramsci opposed such a bias, and it is important to understand why.

First, Gramsci did not advise the study of folklore as an end-in-itself. He opposed an apolitical approach to folklore. He discouraged any scholarly approach conducted with disinterested scientific detachment. Gramsci argued instead that folklore study should be politically rather than positivistically motivated. The collective consciousness of the subaltern may not be the politically powerful class-consciousness of the emerging proletariat, but it remains a collective consciousness that needs to be grasped before any meaningful social change and political transformation can occur through the collective agency and leadership of the working class. Gramsci argued that the study of folklore is necessary to understand the morality of the folk vis-à-vis the morality of bourgeois nationalism as well as the political enlightenment of the revolutionary class.

Today in Bosnia the morality of people is seen as residing in a faith tradition. The morality of Bosnian Catholics as a people is to be found in Catholicism; the morality of Bosnian Serbs as a people is to be found in the Orthodox faith; and the morality of Bosniaks as a people is to be found in Islam. After the war and the end of socialism and, by implication, secular religion, the argument is seen as common sense. Nationalism makes the claim passionately, and the argument fuels nationalism and its resulting ethnic divisions.

Religion does provide moral imperatives by which people live, and the functionality of a community depends upon these moral imperatives. The point is a truism in classical sociology. There are, however, moral imperatives that stand independently of religion that are found in a society's culture, namely, its folklore. These moral imperatives in a society's secular culture are just as crucial to the functionality of a community. When moral imperatives found in a faith are fused with moral imperatives in a culture, a national identity is created. Turkey's national identity is exemplified in how Islam is practiced in its country just as Saudi Arabia's national identity is exemplified in how Islam is practiced in its country. A national identity is exemplified in how Christianity is practiced in Germany just as a national identity is exemplified in how Christianity is practiced in France. These identities are unique because they



draw upon moral imperatives found in their respective cultures in relation to a faith tradition.

The study of folklore, Gramsci insists, is not picturesque. It is where the moral imperatives of a culture that are intrinsic to a society are to be found.<sup>10</sup> The subaltern represent a strata of society that is native to a society. Gramsci insists that this part of society must not be erased, ignored, or encompassed in the progressive movement of modernity. Which part of society best represents the society as a whole? The intelligentsia? The elite class? The bourgeois nationalists? The working class? The folk? Do they equally represent the society as a whole? What if, in fact, the folk represent the society as a whole as well as if not perhaps better than other strata of society? Did the husband's family from a rural area that visited their new in-laws in Sarajevo know something about being Bosnian that their urban in-laws did not? What if the moral practices of the folk represent the society as a whole as well as any other strata in the society?

Bosnia's national social character (which today is neither recognized nor acknowledged inside or outside of Bosnia and is often sorely abused by Bosnia's enemies as well as Bosnians themselves who internalize the hateful view of Bosnia that their enemies promote) is found in their folklore. The political elite in Bosnia persistently foreclose the possibility of community through their manipulation of the subaltern's collective agency with nationalistic rhetoric and religious differences. The subaltern's capacity to produce the feeling of community is what the subaltern offer the larger society, namely, a sense of collectivity, which is what the other strata in the society do not offer. A feeling of community does not come through the creation of nationalistic solidarity or through a proletarian class-consciousness, both of which emerge from negative conditions to ameliorate a sense of alienation or anomie. The subaltern's feeling of community is perhaps an object of admiration among the working class, urban elite, and nationalistic political and religious

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<sup>10</sup> "There exists a 'religion of the people' ... The morality of the people is a custom and, like superstition, it is closely connected to the real religious beliefs of the people: there are certain imperatives which are much stronger and more tenacious than those of Kantian morals" (ibid., 135).

leaders. The subaltern offer the society a feeling of collectivity that arises from the creation of kinship ties established through in-lawship called *prijateljji*. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the folk represent a non-difference, that is, the subaltern see themselves as equal while being members of different ethnic groups. The moral imperatives found in the culture are the same for Bosnians collectively independently of different faith traditions.

At this point, it is important to take a step back and consider the national rather than ethnic context. One question on marriage practices from the Marceo Index survey conducted in fall 2013 was whether parents visited four or more times after the marriage. To be clear, the question is not asking whether a married couple visited the wife's parents or the husband's parents four or more times a year. The question is asking whether the wife and the husband's parents visited each other four or more times a year.<sup>11</sup> Lockwood and Bringa argue that *prijateljji* are important to Muslims vis-à-vis South Slav Christians. One hypothesis then was that Bosniaks will answer the question positively more frequently than Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs. The hypothesis, though, was not supported by the survey responses. Of the married male and female respondents who are Bosnian Croats, 66.3% said their parents visit four or more times a year; of the married male and female respondents who are Bosniaks, 59.3% said their parents visit four or more times a year; and of the married male and female respondents who are Bosnian Serbs, 61.7% said their parents visit four or more times a year (see Table 13.1). There are no statistically significant differences between the different groups of respondents.

The sample in this survey includes South Slav Christians inside rather than outside Bosnia-Herzegovina. The emphasis on affinal relations by all Bosnians reflects a trans-ethnic heritage shared by people in Bosnia-Herzegovina as a collective and not one specific ethnic group. Does it mean then that not only the social organization of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina but also the social organization of South Slav Christians in Bosnia-Herzegovina is a remnant of a cultural heritage from the Middle Ages? Do not only Muslims

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<sup>11</sup> In Bosnian, this survey question is, *Da li su se vaši i roditelji vašeg supružnika međusobno posjećivali najmanje četiri puta u toku godine po bilo kojoj osnovi?*

in Bosnia-Herzegovina but also South Slav Christians in Bosnia-Herzegovina share a cultural heritage that lingered from feudal times through the Ottoman period into the modern era?

**Table 13.1. Parents visiting four or more times a year by nationality**

|                                                   | Nationality |         |       | Row Total |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------|-------|-----------|
|                                                   | Croat       | Bosniak | Serb  |           |
| <b>Parents visiting four or more times a year</b> | 66.3%       | 59.3%   | 61.7% | 62.0%     |

*Source:* Mareco Index Bosnia, Sarajevo, September 2013.

A chi-square test was performed to examine the relation between parents visiting four or more times a year and nationality. The relation between these variables was statistically insignificant,  $X^2(2, n=1,869) = 6.44, p > .01$ .

It was mentioned that the Austrian Kosta Hörmann believed that Bosnian Muslims are the descendants of medieval Bosnians who, after the invasion of Bosnia by the Ottoman Turks, left the schismatic Bosnian Church and embraced the Islamic religion. Hörmann argues that medieval Bosnians embraced Islam without forgetting their native customs, cultural heritage, or collective identity.<sup>12</sup> One cultural custom that Bosnian Muslims seem to have maintained is the emphasis on affinal relations. Is it not just as likely that South Slav Christians in Bosnia-Herzegovina inherited this custom as well? The survey results indicate that such may, in fact, be the case. The thesis here is not just historical, but also sociological and anthropological. The thesis is not just about the past, but also about the present. The emphasis on affinal relations in Bosnia-Herzegovina to this day is not a mythology. It is a living remnant of a shared cultural heritage. The theoretical importance of this finding will be discussed in the next chapter. We are examining ethnic identities in terms of how they collectively exemplify a national personality that is Bosnian and so introduce the idea of a national personality in Bosnia-Herzegovina that is non-nationalistic.

<sup>12</sup> These points about Kosta Hörmann again draw upon Bojan Baskar's essay, "Komšilik and Taking Care of the Neighbor's Shrine in Bosnia-Herzegovina" in *Sharing Sacred Spaces in the Mediterranean*, eds. Dionigi Albera and Maria Courocli (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 51–68.



## CHAPTER 14

# Ethnicity and Nationality

*"I think that as long as our Catholics insist they are Croats and our Orthodox insist they are Serbs, there cannot be a Bosnia."*<sup>1</sup>

Ethnicity is a weighted term. Its meaning can be light or heavy, light with description and ascriptive information or heavy with political and social significance. In an essay titled "Ethnic Identity: Its Logical Foundations and Its Dysfunctions" George Devereux unburdens the term of some of its weightiness.<sup>2</sup> Devereux formulates a heuristic distinction between ethnic identity and ethnic personality; the distinction is useful analytically for framing discussions of ethnicity in the Balkans and Bosnia in particular, indeed for framing discussions of ethnicity anywhere in the world. Ethnic identity, Devereux says, unlike ethnic personality, is a sorting device like, say, the question on a survey. What is your ethnic identity? Is it French, German, Spanish? Is it Croat, Serbian, Bosniak? In this sense, ethnic identity is comparable to gender. Are you female, male? Identity is a label. The label identifies what is ascribed. As categories, the labels are equal; there is no hierarchy; and in theory the categories are mutually exclusive. Of course, not only in Bosnia-Herzegovina but also everywhere in the world this nominalist

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<sup>1</sup> Informant cited in Bringa, Tone. "Nationality Categories, National Identification and Identity Formation in 'Multinational' Bosnia." *The Anthropology of East European Review* 11 (1993): 87.

<sup>2</sup> Devereux, George. "Ethnic Identity: Its Logical Foundations and Its Dysfunctions" in *Ethnic Identity: Cultural Continuities and Change*, eds. George De Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross (Palo Alto: Mayfield Publishing, 1975), 42–71.

theory of how we understand what ethnic identity is does not match social, political, or moral reality.

Ethnic personality, Devereux argues, unlike ethnic identity, is inductively derived from observed behavior. It involves more than sense perception. Knowledge of ethnic personality is inferred. Since religion—Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Islam—distinguishes Bosnia's ethnic groups, the ethnic personalities of South Slavs in Bosnia are derived inductively from observing behaviors of religious customs. Bosnian Croats are Catholic and follow a certain set of religious observances; Bosnian Serbs are Orthodox and follow another set of religious practices; and Bosniaks are Muslims and follow another set of religious practices. Ethnic personality is the exemplification of this or that behavior that distinguishes one group of people.

Ethnic identity and ethnic personality, of course, overlap. They are associative. Socialization develops a person's ethnic personality. If born German, one's behavior likely becomes German. One's behavior, let us say, is reserved in comparison to other people in Europe. Ethnic identity and ethnic personality also diverge. They can be disassociative. While born German, one's ethnic personality may be more like someone from France than Germany. One is more gregarious than is typical of Germans. While one may have one (or more than one) ethnic identity, one may develop a different ethnic personality (or more than one ethnic personality) through different kinds of socializations. Ethnicity in the Balkans and Bosnia is complex, and Devereux's distinction tames to some degree the complexity of what ethnicity is socially and politically.

Devereux's formulation of the difference between ethnic identity and ethnic personality draws upon a distinction Bertrand Russell makes in his theory of knowledge. Russell accounts for two types of knowledge, knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description.<sup>3</sup> The difference between the two helps Russell account for the epistemology and inquiry of positivism. Acquaintance is direct knowledge of something; description is indirect knowledge of something.

An example of the first type of knowledge is knowledge of a color. We know red because it is—it is red. We know the color directly and

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<sup>3</sup> Russell, Bertrand. *The Problems of Philosophy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1912).

immediately. Nothing else about red being red can now be said. Russell writes, "We shall say that we have 'acquaintance' with anything of which we are directly aware, without the intermediary of any process of inference or any knowledge of truths."<sup>4</sup> Ethnic identity, according to Devereux, is a matter of knowledge by acquaintance. Knowledge by acquaintance is a key concept for positivistic inquiry qua science. It represents an end point. When we have this degree of knowledge of something, whether it is a thing, a color, a person, or a truth, "no further knowledge of it itself is even theoretically possible."<sup>5</sup>

Knowledge by description, in contrast, is indirect knowledge; it is derived from observed phenomena. We know through "the intermediary of any process of inference or any knowledge of truths."<sup>6</sup> An example of the second type of knowledge, Russell says, is how we know a table. We derive that a table is a table rather than, say, a stool, a platform, a bench, or a stage indirectly. We know it by drawing upon a certain property, if you will, like a Platonic Form for what a table is or perhaps a Weberian ideal type, with which we do not have knowledge by acquaintance, that is, direct, immediate knowledge. Knowledge by description is a default knowledge. It is the knowledge we have when it is not knowledge by acquaintance. Ethnic personality, according to Devereux, is a matter of knowledge by description.

This distinction between acquaintance and description helps frame Rogers Brubaker's well-known discussion of ethnicity, ethnicity without groups. Whereas conventional studies of ethnicity focus on how we understand ethnicity by acquaintance, Brubaker argues that it is more fruitful to study ethnicity not as a matter of acquaintance but as a matter of description.

What are we studying when we study ethnicity and ethnic conflict? This paper has suggested that we need not frame our analysis in terms of ethnic groups and that it may be more productive to focus on practical categories, cultural idioms, schema, commonsense knowledge, organizational routines and resources, discursive frames, institutionalized forms, political projects, contingent events and variable groupness.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>7</sup> Brubaker, Rogers. "Ethnicity Without Groups." *European Journal of Sociology* 43, no. 2 (2002): 185–86.

Russell's epistemology helps us appreciate Brubaker's position. In sociological inquiry, the analysis of the significance of ethnicity needs to focus on knowledge by description rather than knowledge by acquaintance. Brubaker makes this point clearly when he writes:

It should be noted in closing, however, that by framing our inquiry in this way ... we may end up not studying ethnicity at all. It may be that "ethnicity" is simply a convenient—though in certain respects misleading—rubric under which to group phenomena that, on the one hand, are highly disparate and, on the other, have a great deal in common with phenomena that are not ordinarily subsumed under the rubric of ethnicity.<sup>8</sup>

In other words, whether it is even truly possible to have knowledge by acquaintance of ethnicity is problematic for social science.

The distinction between ethnic identity and ethnic personality is heuristic. In everyday language, we use the term ethnic identity broadly to mean what Devereux says is ethnic personality. While ethnicity is a rubric that seems to be known by acquaintance, it, in fact, as Brubaker points out, is known by description. Devereux himself is forced to collapse the heuristic distinction and introduces a third term: "I now pass from the concept of pure ethnic identity, to the logically impure concept of the ethnic identity model, about which many predicative statements will be made. But the reader must constantly bear in mind that from this point on 'ethnic identity' denotes not the pure concept (label), but the impure ethnic identity model."<sup>9</sup>

Let us apply this theory of ethnicity to various political issues involving ethnicity in Bosnia-Herzegovina today. Bosnians have ethnic identities. They may be, as sadly reified by the Dayton Peace Accords, Bosnian Croat, Bosnian Catholic, or Croat; Bosnian Serb, Orthodox Bosnian, or Serb; or Bosnian Muslim, Muslim, or Bosniak, although this term Bosniak, it is argued by some, has been used in the past to refer to all native inhabitants in Bosnia. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, there are also Bosnian Jews and Bosnian Romani. One serious problem with the Dayton Peace Accords is that since a Bosnian Jew or Bosnian Romani is not a Croat, Serb, or Bosniak,

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Devereux, "Ethnic Identity," 52–53.



these Bosnians are prohibited from becoming president of Bosnia-Herzegovina and holding positions in the Federal Parliament. The Dayton Peace Accords violates the minority rights of Bosnians who do not fall into the three ethnic categories privileged by the Dayton Peace Accords. Dervo Sejdić and Jakob Finci, who are Roma and Jewish, filed and won a law suit charging discrimination at the European Court of Human Rights. The government of Bosnia-Herzegovina now is working on a way to change its constitution in order to redress this problem given the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights.

Besides having an ethnic identity (Croat, Serb, Bosniak, Jew, Roma), one has a national identity. When someone carries a passport, the person's national identity is a category, a sorting device, basically a categorical variable. A problem with the census taken in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2013 is that citizens could self-identity only according to their ethnic identity and not according to their national identity. Citizens could not state their national identity as Bosnian. The census forced them to self-identity as Croat, Serb, Bosniak, or Other. Bosnians were forced to declare an ethnic rather than a national identity and could self-identity as Bosnian only by saying Other and then explaining what Other meant. A latent consequence of the census was to render national identity secondary and ethnic identity primary where ethnic identity appears to deny the existence of one's national identity given the tacit binary logic of categorical variables.

Just as a person has both an ethnic identity and an ethnic personality, a person has both a national identity and a national personality. When Bosnian Serbs went to Serbia during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, they encountered stigmatization as Bosnians from Serbian Serbs resulting in social difficulties. Bosnian Serbs learned that their national personality made a difference, that they were perhaps more Bosnian than Serbian, even though their ethnic identity is the same as the Serbs living in Serbia.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, Croats in

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<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth Dauphinee depicts in an astute and tragic way how a Bosnian Serb soldier who committed war crimes comes to feel out of place in Serbia. While his ethnic identity is Serbian, his national personality is more Bosnian than Serbian: "The Serbs in Belgrade were tired of hearing stupid Bosnian accents and

Croatia are quick to point out that their national personality differs from the national personality of Bosnian Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina even though Croats in Croatia and Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina share an ethnic identity. Likewise, when Bosniaks from Sandžak, as South Slav Muslims from Serbia, visit Sarajevo, they may feel uncomfortable if only because their language identifies them as Serbian rather than as Bosnian. Bosniaks in Serbia have a national personality that is different from the national personality of Bosniaks in Bosnia-Herzegovina even though they share the same ethnic identity.<sup>11</sup>

Devereux gives us a clear and critical way to talk about the problem of nationalism at the end of his essay. Devereux writes:

In short, it may be argued that a hypercategorizing [overcharging] of one's ethnic identity leads, in effect, to a drastic reduction of one's relevant class identities and thus to the annihilation of the individual's real identity. The same occurs when only one of a person's class identities is deemed relevant. ... It is dysfunctional, indeed catastrophic, to reduce another person to such one-dimensionality. But the contemporary scene abounds in examples of persons stripping themselves of all their potentially meaningful class identities, ceasing to be anything but X's, where X denotes a real or spurious *ethos*.<sup>12</sup>

Nationalism does exactly what Devereux describes. It reduces not only another but also one's own self to one-dimensionality. All potentially meaningful class identities cease to signify anything after being encased by an X ethos. Nationalism stipulates that ethnic identity and ethnic personality are one and the same, that what is ascribed is what is achieved and that what is achieved is what is ascribed. Nationalism reifies ethnic personality as ethnic identity.

Devereux' work critically defines terms and frames the major subject of this study. We are examining ethnic identities in terms of

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dealing with stupid Bosnian peasants in their sophisticated city" *The Politics of Exile*, [London: Routledge, Taylor, and Francis, 2013], 84.

<sup>11</sup> Recall a point made in a previous chapter: Denis Striković, an anthropologist studying the social organization of Bosniaks in Serbia pointed out to me that Bosniaks in Serbia count their agnatic ancestors back ten generations, something Bosniaks in Bosnia-Herzegovina reportedly do not do. In terms of this kinship custom, Bosniaks in Serbia are more like the South Slav Christians in Serbia.

<sup>12</sup> Devereux, "Ethnic Identity," 66.

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how they collectively exemplify a national personality that is Bosnian. Bosnians have not only a national identity (they carry a Bosnian passport although some carry other passports instead) but also a national personality. The task of this study is to account for this national personality without becoming nationalistic, without stripping Bosnians of all their meaningful class identities, real and potential. Despite the lack of openness and political interest in such an account, such an account remains all too timely for both moral and scientific reasons.



## CHAPTER 15

# Accounting for Bosnian Culture

*“The positive bond that connects several ethnic groups in an encompassing social system depends on the complementarity of the groups with respect to some of their characteristic cultural features.”<sup>1</sup>*

My wife’s parents lived in Canada; my parents lived in the United States. After we married, my wife’s parents visited my parents on their way to a winter vacation. The visit occurred without involving either my wife or me. On their trip back, my wife’s parents visited my parents again, and they spent a weekend together. My wife and I wondered, “What are they doing?” Such a visit is not typical in North America. North American culture does not encourage such a visitation. If anything, the culture discourages it. These visitations occur infrequently.

My wife and I, though, felt our marriage was being affirmed through our parents visiting each other. Our parents were giving their support and acceptance. A part of me felt like a child. Our parents were still in control. At the same time, my wife and I felt twice blessed. We had two mothers and two fathers. Competition for importance did not exist between our parents. As David Herlich says, evoking Saint Peter Damian’s theology from the early Middle Ages, “Marriage... unites human society, which time and the divergence of family lines relentlessly pull asunder.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Barth, Fredrik. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 30.

<sup>2</sup> Herlihy, David. “The Making of the Medieval Family: Symmetry, Structure, and Sentiment” in *Medieval Families: Perspectives on Marriage, Household, and Children* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 200.

As mentioned in a previous chapter, one survey question conducted by Mareco Index Bosnia on marriage practices in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2013 was “Did your parents visit four or more times a year?” The question is not asking whether the couple visited the wife or the husband’s parents four or more times a year. The question is asking whether the wife and husband’s parents visited each other four or more times a year. My wife’s parents and my parents visited each other a total of three times. When composing this question, the director at Mareco Index Bosnia suggested that the question be, “Did your parents visit twelve or more times a year?” I thought that number was too high. We compromised at the number four, although the director thought twelve was a reasonable number. During a recent visit, a young Bosnian couple told me that their parents visit each other four or more times a month. This would mean their parents visit each other close to fifty times a year. They noted that their parents live near each other in the same neighborhood.

For a non-Bosnian but not for a Bosnian, the results from the survey are surprising. The percent of married respondents who said that their parents visit four or more times a year is 62% (see Table 13.1 again on page 111). One woman in Sarajevo in a conversation with me stressed that these visitations occur for their own sake, for the sake of *prijatelj*i, and not just because of a holiday or a child’s birth. A woman in eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina said during an interview that if the husband and wife’s parents visit each other for the first time at the birth of a grandchild, *prijatelj*i are not truly established. Visits need to occur before the actual birth of a grandchild, shortly after the marriage.

William G. Lockwood and Tone Bringa studied how affinal visitations after marriage are a particular custom of Bosniaks in Bosnia-Herzegovina. One hypothesis then was that Bosniaks will answer yes to this question, “Did your parents visit four or more times a year?” at a higher percentage than Croats and Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The hypothesis, though, was not supported by the results of the recent survey by Mareco Index Bosnia. Of the married respondents who are Bosnian Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 66.3% said their parents visit four or more times a year; of the married respondents who are Bosniaks, 59.3% said their parents visit four or

more times a year; and of the married respondents who are Bosnian Serbs, 61.7% said their parents visit four or more times a year (see Table 13.1). There is not a significant statistical difference between married respondents who said their parents visit four or more times a year and nationality. The emphasis on establishing affinal relations is not only a cultural custom of Bosniaks, but also a cultural custom of Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs. Lockwood and Bringa do not take up this topic, given their focus on Bosnian Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bosnian Croats, Bosniaks, and Bosnian Serbs, though, are all descendants of the inhabitants of medieval Bosnia; while members of different faith traditions (Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Islam), Bosnians share a cultural heritage that persevered through the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian rule of Bosnia-Herzegovina into the modern era. As noted in a previous chapter, the custom that emphasizes affinal relations does not come from the Ottoman Turks. The custom is linked to the early Middle Ages in Europe, of which Bosnia was a part, and existed before Ottoman rule.<sup>3</sup> It is notable that the custom is sustained today in Bosnia-Herzegovina by Bosnians in the three largest ethnic groups.

At first glance, what is surprising in this cross-tabulation is that the percentage of married respondents who are Bosniaks and said that their parents visit four or more times a year is slightly lower than married respondents who are Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs and said that their parents visit four or more times a year. This difference may reflect the impact of the recent war. The war had social costs that studies have documented and examined, but one cost not discussed in the literature is the ability of Bosnian families to initiate and sustain affinal kinship. The forced migration of Bosnians and, in particular, Bosniaks, was a tragic consequence of the war that damaged the society and its social organization. In the face of unconscionable violence, many Bosnians were forced to flee their homes and communities and live either outside Bosnia-

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<sup>3</sup> For a recent study of this medieval period in Bosnia, see Lovrenović, Dubravko. *Medieval Tombstones and Graveyards of Bosnia and Humey* (Sarajevo: Rabic, 2010). See also the impressive works in English of Noel Malcolm, John Fine, Robert Donia, Rusmir Mahmutćehajić, Ivan Lovrenović, Marko Hoare, and Mustafa Imanmović.

Herzegovina as diaspora or inside Bosnia-Herzegovina in regions other than the communities they had known and enjoyed for generations before the war. This dislocation of a large proportion of the population impacted the ability of people in Bosnia-Herzegovina to maintain affinal relations, which is a social custom and cultural heritage for all people in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In the recent war, a higher proportion of Bosniaks were killed. More significantly, a higher percentage of the civilian casualties as opposed to soldier casualties were Bosniaks. Research and Documentation Center in Sarajevo reports the following percentages: some 65% of those killed were Bosniaks, followed by 25% Serbs and more than 8% Croats. Some 83% of the civilian casualties were Bosniaks, 10% were Serbs and more than 5% were Croats, followed by a small number of others such as Albanians or Romani people.<sup>4</sup> The percentage of civilian casualties as opposed to soldier casualties is much higher for Bosniaks. Despite the devastating social costs of the war and the loss of many human lives, Bosniaks still sustain affinal relations at a high level. Sustaining this custom despite the formidable conditions of a genocidal war bears witness to the resilience of society and ethnic community; it bears witness to the restorative character of the social within a community.

Marriage customs are changing in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is helpful to review these changes using the survey results from Mareco Index Bosnia. Consider elopement. Of the respondents married and between the ages of eighteen and twenty-seven, 6.8% said they eloped; of the respondents married and between the ages of twenty-eight and thirty-seven, 12.5% said they eloped; and of the respondents married and between the age of thirty-eight and forty-seven, 15.5% said they eloped. The trend continues; the frequency of elopement increases as the age of the respondent increases (see Fig. 15.1). Thus elopement, which was relatively common sixty or more years ago, particularly in rural areas, is a declining marriage

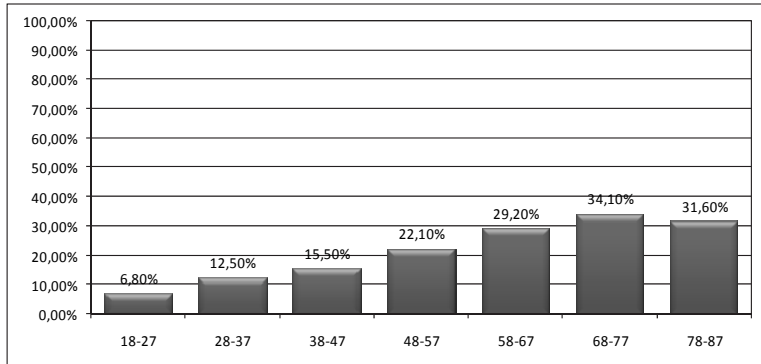
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<sup>4</sup> See *The Bosnian Book of the Dead* published by the Research and Documentation Center and Humanitarian Law Society of Serbia. The book recommends that the total number of documented casualties reported (n = 97,207) be seen as an approximation of the minimal number and not a complete report. The proportions reported make an important point.



practice in Bosnia-Herzegovina. If the trend continues, as it likely will, the custom will become extinct. Here is one reason why it is important to study the custom today. There is still a significant number of people who are able to share their direct knowledge of the cultural custom and their understanding of what it means.

**Fig. 15.1. Elopement by age**



*Source:* Mareco Index Bosnia. Omnibus Survey, September 2013.

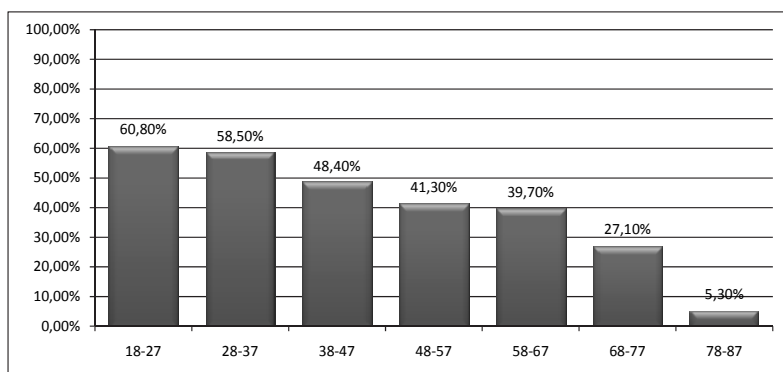
$\chi^2(6, n = 1,869) = 66.60, p < .001.$

Consider the engagement party. Of the respondents married and between the ages of eighteen and twenty-seven, 60.8% said they had an engagement party; of the respondents married and between the ages of twenty-eight and thirty-seven, 58.5% said they had an engagement party; of the respondents married and between the ages of thirty-eight and forty-seven, 48.4% said they had an engagement party. The trend continues; as age increases, the frequency of married respondents who had engagement parties decreases. Of the respondents who married and were between the ages of seventy-seven and eighty-eight, 5.3% said they had an engagement party (see Fig. 15.2).

Marriage customs in Bosnia-Herzegovina are changing. When considering these trends where the frequency of elopement is dramatically decreasing and the frequency of engagement parties is dramatically increasing, it seems that traditional marriage customs in Bosnia-Herzegovina are fading. Marriage customs in Bosnia-

Herzegovina are becoming more like marriage customs in Croatia, Serbia, and Turkey and less like traditional customs in Bosnia-Herzegovina. For example, while engagement parties are a common marriage practice in Turkey, they had been uncommon in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Engagement parties are now more common in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the trend is true within each ethnic group.

**Figure 15.2. Engagement party by age**



*Source:* Mareco Index Bosnia. Omnibus Survey, September 2013.

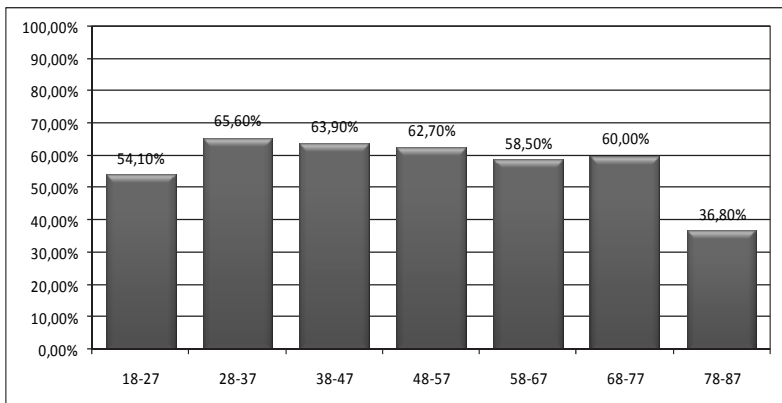
$\chi^2 (6, n = 1,869) = 77.40, p < .001$ .

There is one marriage custom, however, that is not changing, namely the custom of affinal visitations. Of the respondents married and between the ages of eighteen and twenty-seven, 54.1% said that their parents visit four or more times a year; of the respondents married and between the ages of twenty-eight and thirty-seven, 65.6% said their parents visit four or more times a year; of the respondents married and between the ages of thirty-eight and forty-seven, 63.9% said their parents visit four or more times a year (see Fig. 15.3).

Unlike the previous cross-tabulations, the differences in this cross-tabulation have no statistical significance. (Of the respondents who married and were between the ages seventy-eight and eighty-eight, 36.8% said their parents visit four or more times a year. The lower percentage is due likely to the age of the respondents.) The custom of emphasizing affinal relations is not changing in Bosnia-

Herzegovina. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the “horizontal” line of collateral kinship, which gives meaning to social identity and community, is as high as the “vertical” line, which gives emphasis to the patrilineal descent line. Lockwood, in fact, suggests that the “horizontal” line is even a bit higher than the “vertical” line: “*Prijateljstvo* ... tends to be regarded more highly than any other bond between households, including all but the closest agnatic relationships.”<sup>5</sup> Rusmir Mahmutćehajić articulates a similar dialectic in religious terms. He writes, “Thus the self is linked vertically to sanctity and horizontally to the world. Through the first link, the self can be God’s image, sublime verticality.... Through the horizontal link, human beings are open to the outside world.”<sup>6</sup> The function of the affinal kinship *prijatelji* is to establish the horizontal link where human beings become related to the outside world.

**Figure 15.3. Parents visit four or more times a year by age**



Source: Mareco Index Bosnia. Omnibus Survey, September 2013.

$\chi^2(6, n=1,869) = 11.9, p > .05$ .

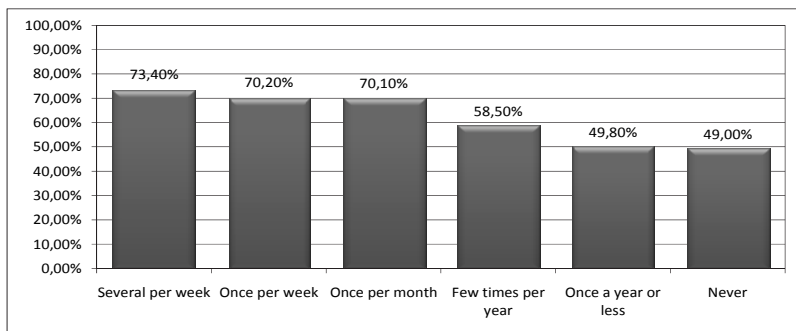
Consider another question in the survey: “How frequently does the respondent attend religious services?” The choices were: several

<sup>5</sup> Lockwood, William G. “Converts and Consanguinity: The Social Organization of Moslem Slavs in Western Bosnia.” *Ethnology* 11, no. 1 (1972): 71.

<sup>6</sup> Mahmutćehajić, Rusmir. *Bosnia the Good: Tolerance and Tradition* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2000), 46–47.

per week, once a week, once per month, few times per year, once a year or less, never. The question indicates the strength of the respondent's commitment to a faith tradition. Of the respondents married and who attended religious services several times per week, 73.4% also said that their parents visit four or more times a year; of the respondents married and who attended religious services once per week, 70.2% also said their parents visit four or more times a year. Of the respondents married and who attended religious services once per month, 70.1% also said their parents visit four or more times a year. Of the respondents married and who attended religious services a few times a year, 58.5% also said their parents visit four or more times a year. The trend continues; the more frequently respondents attend religious services, the more frequently they report that their parents visited four or more times a year (see Fig. 15.4).

**Figure 15.4. Parents visit four or more times a year by attend religious services**



Source: Mareco Index Bosnia. Omnibus Survey, September 2013.

$\chi^2(5, n = 1,850) = 55.52, p < .001$ .

The custom of maintaining affinal relations is positively associated with the religiosity of respondents. It is a truism in the work of Émile Durkheim that religion provides the moral convictions by which people live together in a society, and the functionality of a community depends upon these moral convictions. There are, however, moral

convictions that are independent of religion and found in a society's secular culture. These convictions are also crucial to the functionality of a community. Attending religious services indicates a commitment to a respondent's faith tradition. Parents visiting four or more times a year indicates a commitment to a society's culture. The convictions found in the respondent's faith tradition are positively related to the convictions found in the society's customs. The moral guidelines of religion and the moral guidelines of the culture reinforce each other.<sup>7</sup>

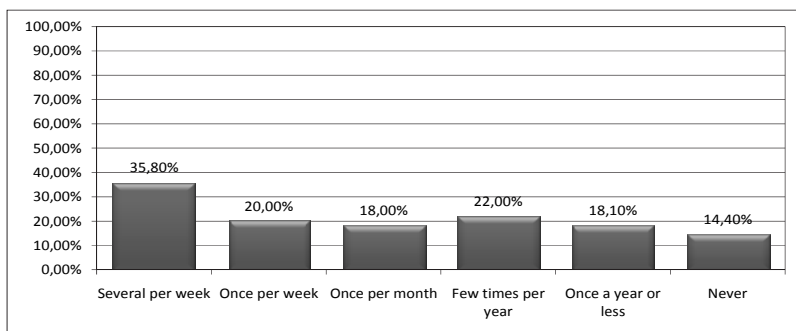
Consider again the question: "How frequently does the respondent attend religious services?" The choices were: several per week, once a week, once per month, few times per year, once a year or less, never. The question indicates the strength of the respondent's commitment to a faith tradition. One hypothesis is that the respondents who eloped to marry attend religious services less frequently than respondents who did not elope. This hypothesis, though, is not supported. The opposite, in fact, is true. Of the respondents married and who attended religious services several times per week, 35.8% said they eloped; of the respondents married and who attended religious services once per week, 20% said they eloped; of the respondents married and who attended religious services once per month, 18% said that they eloped. Of the respondents married and who attended religious services a few times a year, 22% said that they eloped. The trend continues; the more frequently respondents attend religious services, the more likely they eloped (see Fig. 15.5). The custom of elopement is positively associated with the religiosity of respondents. To repeat an important point, religion provides the moral convictions by which people live together in a society, and the functionality of a community depends upon these moral convictions. There are, however, moral convictions that are independent of religion and found in a society's secular culture. These convictions that are independent of religion are also crucial to the functionality of a community. Attending religious services shows com-

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<sup>7</sup> Bosniaks, for example, hesitate to adopt the cultural as opposed to religious customs of Muslims who are not from Bosnia-Herzegovina. There is in Sarajevo an aesthetic distaste for the recently built mosques in the Middle Eastern architectural style rather than Bosnian style. Likewise, Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs hesitate to adopt the cultural customs imported by Croats from Croatia or Serbs from Serbia.

mitment to a faith tradition. Elopement shows commitment to a society's culture. The two practices, one religious and the other secular, are positively related; thus the customs of religion and culture reinforce each other.

**Figure 15.5 Elopement by attend religious services**



Source: Mareco Index Bosnia. Omnibus Survey, September 2013.

$\chi^2(5, n = 1,850) = 21.95, p < .01$ .

An assumption about elopements is that, if the choice is a poor one, there is the possibility of divorce. This possibility, Lockwood points out, is more available to Muslims than to the Catholics and Orthodox believers in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is why it is thought that Bosniaks would be more likely to elope than Bosnian Croats or Bosnian Serbs.<sup>8</sup> As indicated in a previous chapter, however, this assumption does not hold true with the survey data. As was pointed out, of the female respondents who eloped, 94% are still married. Of the respondents who did not elope, 89.3% are still married (See Table 5.1 again on page 41). The chance of being divorced for respondents who eloped is slightly less than for respondents who did not elope.

Another survey question was if the respondent married someone in the same faith. The question measures the percentage of bi-ethnic marriages. The percentage of women who married someone in the

<sup>8</sup> Lockwood, William G. "Bride Theft and Social Maneuverability in Western Bosnia." *Anthropological Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (1974): 266.

same faith in Bosnia-Herzegovina was 88%; the percentage of women in Sarajevo who are married to someone in the same faith was 76.8%. Exogamous marriages, marriages outside one's ethnic group, are more likely in urban areas, and this pattern is well-known and often noted in the literature. The percentage of exogamous marriages in urban areas before the war was higher than indicated in this survey conducted in 2013.

Bi-ethnic marriages occurred frequently during Yugoslav socialism. Lockwood predicted that "Cultural differentiation will lessen with continuing modernization in contemporary Yugoslavia. Gradually, a feeling of Yugoslavness will replace ethnic identification."<sup>9</sup> One hypothesis then was that women who elope are more likely to marry someone in a different faith, someone whom one's traditional parents would not approve of. This hypothesis, though, was not supported. The percentage of women who eloped and married someone in the same faith was 90.7%, slightly higher than the total percentage of women who married someone in the same faith, which was 88%.

Bringa provides one way to explain the high percentage of women who eloped and married someone in the same faith. The risk of eloping with someone in a different faith is losing touch with one's family. Marriage with someone in a different faith can make affinal visitations uncomfortable. While in-law visitations occur between families in different faiths, the practice is not common as Bringa observed: "The gift-exchange pattern between Catholic affines is similar to that described for Muslims, but since intermarriage between Muslims and Catholics is not common, the particular exchanges which take place at marriage are rare between Catholic and Muslim households."<sup>10</sup> Gift-exchange patterns between affines are mimed in a parallel way by the ethnic communities in Bosnia.

In an interview conducted in 1993, Ivo Banac made the following statement and posed the following question:

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<sup>9</sup> Lockwood, William G. "Living Legacy of the Ottoman Empire: The Serbo-Croatian Speaking Moslems: of Bosnia-Hercegovina" in *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The East European Pattern*, eds. Abraham Ascher, Tibor Halasi-Kun, and Béla K. Király (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 223.

<sup>10</sup> Bringa, Tone. *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 163.

If Bosnia were a collectivity of separate entities, then it would have been a mini-Yugoslavia. But it is not that. Bosnia is a historical entity which has its own identity and its own history. ... I view Bosnia as primarily a functioning society which Yugoslavia never was. My question is how does one keep a complicated, complex identity like Bosnia-Herzegovina together?<sup>11</sup>

Few politicians in Bosnia-Herzegovina today would support Banac's statement and pose his question. Many politicians inside and outside of Bosnia-Herzegovina say in contrast to Banac that Bosnia is a collectivity of separate entities. They say that Bosnia is essentially a mini-Yugoslavia in terms of its social and political structure. One problem with the Dayton Peace Accords is that it forced Bosnia-Herzegovina to become a mini-Yugoslavia; that is, it forced Bosnia-Herzegovina to become what Bosnia is not. When Bosnia functions as a mini-Yugoslavia (if it even does that), Bosnia ignores its national identity and its cultural history. The Dayton Peace Accords does not acknowledge what Bosnia is. The Dayton Peace Accords has become like a straitjacket, written by foreigners charmed by the nationalist arguments of Bosnia's enemies, creating a new Bosnian constitution and state structure *ex nihilo*. Whenever a positive and progressive initiative is taken for the sake of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the straitjacket tightens, resulting in no movement at all or great pain whenever movement is attempted. Because of these political knots that cannot be untied while the Dayton Peace Accords remains in force, Bosnia is unable to take its first step into the European Union. Even worse, Bosnia is unable to be herself.

Few today support Banac's statement that Bosnia is a historical entity which has its own identity and its own history, despite the scholarship affirming the statement. The statement is seen as idealistic and politically naive. Banac's question, however, is still the key one politically and morally: How does one keep a complicated, complex identity like Bosnia-Herzegovina together? What is tragic is that many say, convince others to say, and act so as to convince others to say that one cannot; that is, one cannot keep a complicated, complex identity like Bosnia-Herzegovina together. This

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<sup>11</sup> Banac, Ivo. "Separating History from Myth: An Interview with Ivo Banac" in *Why Bosnia: Writings on the Balkan War*, eds. Rabia Ali and Lawrence Lifschultz (Stony Creek: Pamphleteer's Press, 1993), 139.



negative response to Banac's question is then framed as scientifically valid and politically legitimate.

The purpose of this study is to counter the negative response and provide a positive response to Banac's question, one that is not only moral but also scientifically valid and politically legitimate. People in the ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina keep the complicated, complex identity of Bosnia-Herzegovina together. People in the ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina sustain the kinship custom that is particular to Bosnia-Herzegovina as a multi-ethnic and mono-national society.

A type of social relation that has received scholarly attention after the war is called *komšilik*, which means good neighborliness. *Komšilik* is not just passive tolerance but active goodwill toward neighbors from different ethnic communities. The issue that animates this scholarly attention is Banac's question: How does one keep a complicated, complex identity like Bosnia-Herzegovina together? The scholarship seeks to access whether the relationship of *komšilik* is a possible answer. Some scholars answer no, and some answer yes.

Xavier Bougarel argues that *komšilik* is not solid enough to withstand social violence. *Komšilik* breaks down when social order dissolves and self-interest becomes paramount.<sup>12</sup> The idea of *komšilik* positively reflects Émile Rousseau's understanding of human nature in the state of nature untainted and undamaged by social forces. Once the Hobbesian logic looms on the horizon, good neighborliness becomes non-existent, and force and fraud rule as cardinal virtues. Bojan Baskar summarizes Bougarel's position this way: "*Komšilik* relations are essentially ambiguous, fragile, and inherently prone to turn into their opposite when the state collapsed."<sup>13</sup> Neighbors are not intimates; they are acquaintances, respected from a distance and conditionally.

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<sup>12</sup> Bougarel, Xavier. "Death and the Nationalist: Martyrdom, War Memory, and Veteran Identity among Bosnian Muslims" in *The New Bosnian Mosaic: Identities, Memories, and Moral Claims in a Post-War Society*, eds. Xavier Bougarel, Elissa Helms, and Ger Duijzings (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> Baskar, Bojan. "Komšilik and Taking Care of the Neighbor's Shrine in Bosnia-Herzegovina" in *Sharing Sacred Spaces in the Mediterranean*, eds. Dionigi Albera and Maria Courocli (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

A counter to the negative formulation of the fragility of *komšilik* is found in the work of Svetlana Broz and her book *Good People in an Evil Time*. As the title indicates, during the evil time of war, people in Bosnia-Herzegovina acted with goodwill, interpersonal courage, and mutual trust toward members of other ethnic groups.<sup>14</sup> People remained committed to the relation of *komšilik* even when the state collapsed. A notable few, an immense minority, from each side of the war offered timely support, safety, understanding, and goodwill to neighbors from other communities in distress and need. The testimonies Broz collected bear witness to the human character as socially good even during the most formidable and dangerous times. Rousseau's understanding of human nature persevered in the face of the Hobbesian jungle.

*Komšilik* and *prijatelji* are two different types of social relations that structure social organization; what they hold in common is that they are particular representations of what Ferdinand Tönnies calls *gemeinschaft*. Tönnies' primary distinction is between *gesellschaft* [society] and *gemeinschaft* [community] where the former is modern, impersonal, individualistic, artificial, and mechanical and the latter is traditional, intimate, collective, real, and natural.<sup>15</sup> Tönnies laments how in the course of modernity *gemeinschaft* gives way to *gesellschaft*. Tönnies also distinguishes different kinds of *gemeinschaft*, the type of social organization towards which he is most favorable. First, he says there is *gemeinschaft* by blood, denoting unity of agnatic kin. This, of course, is nationalism when elevated to the state level. Then, he says there is *gemeinschaft* of mind, which indicates cooperation and coordinated action for a common goal. His example, like the examples from the scholarly discussions of *komšilik*, is the neighborly bond represented by sharing sacred places. Neighbors cooperate and coordinate actions in the interest of a common good, where their mutual goodwill is the mindfulness that is shared. The bond is not abstract altruism but enlightened self-interest. Then Tönnies speaks of the *gemeinschaft* of kin, which

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<sup>14</sup> Broz, Svetlana. *Good People in an Evil Time: Portraits of Complicity and Resistance in the Bosnian War* (New York: Other Press, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> Tönnies, Ferdinand. *Community and Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957).

signifies a common relation to human beings themselves. *Gemeinschaft* of kin affirms affinal kin and friendship.

It is neither the structure of the Dayton Peace Accords nor international or local politicians that will keep a complicated and complex identity like Bosnia together; rather it is the strength of *gemeinschaft* and of the different types of *gemeinschaft* that overlap and support each other. Nationalism argues that *gemeinschaft* of blood is the most supreme form of *gemeinschaft* and it undermines as secondary *gemeinschaft* of common mind and *gemeinschaft* of humanity. Scholars argue that *gemeinschaft* of common mind is limited by its pragmatic conditions where the self-interest of individuals ultimately overrules the common mind. *Gemeinschaft* of kin is based on affinal relation. Tönnies himself argues that *gemeinschaft* of kin is the most human and truly supreme form of *gemeinschaft*. This latter *gemeinschaft* is the most stable and, ultimately, a model for the other types of *gemeinschaft*. As long as Bosnians continue to sustain this third type of *gemeinschaft* in their trans-ethnic way, the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina is promising.

One overlooked casualty of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina is her collective commitment to a pluralistic, tolerant, integrated society. Unconscionable violence and vicious propaganda were brought to bear against her heritage, cultural convictions, social practices, and civic order—making it next to impossible for Bosnia to sustain her multi-confessional and syncretistic-informed traditions. It has been argued that in Bosnia there are not multiple cultures co-residing in the same vicinity. Nor are there multiple cultures coexisting independently of each other. There is a singular culture that encompasses each ethnicity and makes different faiths—Catholicism, Judaism, Islam, and Orthodoxy—culturally interdependent.

The tragedy of Bosnia-Herzegovina after the war is that it does have a transethnic history and culture, but today there are few functional trans-ethnic institutions to support, respect, and sustain its traditions and culture. International groups working in Bosnia inadvertently assume a shallow, instrumental, and formulaic relation to Bosnia, which makes it difficult for Bosnia as a society to re-establish the trans-ethnic institutions it needs. The result is that Bosnia's trans-ethnic traditions, cultures, and histories are at risk. This book, drawing upon anthropology, psychology, and sociology,

provides empirical evidence that stands as inconvenient facts for the party opinions of Bosnia's enemies; it provides uncomfortable arguments against the nationalistic ideologies that seek to misrepresent and deny what Bosnia is.

What is it about the Jerusalem-like configuration of faiths in Bosnia-Herzegovina that makes it vulnerable to the nationalism of its neighbors but resilient in the face of relentless attacks? What is it about Bosnia's enigmatic mixture of epochs (including a distinctive medieval period from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire starting in the fifteenth century, the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the nineteenth century, and communist Yugoslavia during the twentieth century) that makes her defenseless in the face of nation-state building centered on a monolithic ethnicity, but invincible in the face of that hideous strength? A statement on how Bosnia is not a collectivity of mini-states and on what Bosnia is helps answer this question.

If Bosnia is a name for any kind of identity, its content is not the mathematical sum of nations or national cultures, nor is it their drowning in a new (supra) national construction. Its content lies in permanent cultural interaction. The name *Bosnian* is thus not a term for a national order, nor only a regional or territorial one. It is a name for the *process of civilization* we have described, something which through all historical changes and political adversities has lasted for a millennium, to an equal degree practiced in everyday life with equal vitality by all. In this process of interaction as a constant (its name is Bosnia) national cultures participate as variables retaining their special identities and exposing themselves to continuous culture creating relations of receiving and giving. In practice, every national culture in Bosnia is both what it is by name, and something more.<sup>16</sup>

This study of elopement and the in-law relation *prijatelj* is one way to "operationalize" the concept of Bosnian culture and do so not just with the disciplines of history and political science, but also with the disciplines of anthropology and sociology. Bosnian culture at first glance seems immeasurable but is not.

There is something in society that cannot be killed with violence, whether it is the violence of nature or the violence of society itself. An invincible sense of interrelatedness and interconnected-

<sup>16</sup> Lovrenović, Ivan. *Bosnia: A Cultural History* (Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 2001), 227.

ness characterizes society. Among human beings, there is a resilience based on who they are as human beings. This resilience exemplifies what human beings are as individuals and as members of a community not only empirically but also metaphysically. The war in Bosnia (its social meaning, its political consequences, its moral character, its historical lesson) has been examined and discussed in innumerable books on Bosnia-Herzegovina. Who Bosnians are and their collective social character have been less frequently examined and remain relatively obscure. This study has focused on the national personality of Bosnia-Herzegovina, as exemplified in an array of shared marriage customs. Even if this national personality is hardly ever expressed in collective political action, it remains significant and meaningful in the social lives of Bosnians. Even if the constitution created by the Dayton Peace Accords fails to acknowledge the existence of this national personality, the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina poignantly bear witness to its reality.



# Appendixes

## **Survey Report, Mareco Index Bosnia**

The data set and its full report are archived at Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at [www.openicpsr.org](http://www.openicpsr.org).

|                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Study:                  | OMNIBUS WAVE 82      |
| Field Dates:            | 02–18 September 2013 |
| Sample Size:            | 2,900, aged 18+      |
| Research Provider:      | MARECO INDEX BOSNIA  |
| Number of Interviewers: | 107                  |

Mareco Index Bosnia, member of GALLUP INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION, with all its employees (full-time and part-time including supervisors and interviewers) is fully committed to the highest standards of professional practice as enshrined in the ICC/Esomar Code on Market and Social Research and ESOMAR World Research Guidelines. Within the industry it is a promise to uphold the highest level of professional conduct and to implement best practices that support effective decision-making.

The omnibus survey is based on a multistage, random sample of 2,900 adults, aged 18 years plus. Each survey is representative of the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina by entity (Republika Srpska and the Federation B&H), region, ethnicity, gender, age group and urban or rural residence. Rural areas are defined as those localities with fewer than 2,000 inhabitants.

Federation BiH n=2050 in 10 cantons (including boost of 400 Croats ).

Republika Srpska n=850 in 6 regions.

### The Sample: Selection Process and Specifics

1. The sample is stratified by 16 cantons/regions and urbanity, resulting in 20 strata. The sample is distributed proportional to the total population of each canton.
2. Cluster size (number of interviews per sampling point) is to be set at 10. As a result, each canton's proportional allocation of interviews to urban, or rural strata, is divided by 10 and rounded to the nearest whole number to determine the proportional to size allocation of clusters for each of the 20 strata.
3. Clusters are then distributed within each of the stratum to Opstinas, which are selected via probability proportional to size systematic random sampling. This maintains both elements of random selection, as well as probability proportional to size. If a selected Opstina is inaccessible due to security reasons, the Opstina will be replaced randomly with an Opstina within the same strata.
4. Within each selected Opstina, sampling points are randomly selected from a list of cities where available, and a list of settlements where maps of cities are unavailable. Urbanity of a sampling point is determined by vendor and local institutional knowledge.
5. The starting point is randomly selected for each sampling point, and can be the center (the official office of the local community), a prominent worship structure, or other prominent landmark.
6. A random walk is performed from the starting point, selecting every fifth residence for sample. In multi-family dwellings (i.e., apartment blocks) each floor was treated as a street and one household could be selected from each floor (the fifth apartment to the right of the elevator or staircase). In rural settlements the selection was done using the 'zigzag' principle, and every household (or every second house where available) was used. The interviewer will start at the first house and if there is no answer or the selected respondent is not present, two more attempts will be made before the household is replaced. Additional/replacement households in the cluster will be selected using the same skip/step pattern.
7. Interviewers use "Next Birthday" method to select individual respondents within an eligible household.



### Callbacks (rate, method, and results)

If the designated respondent was not available, the interviewer was required to schedule up to two callbacks (different times of day and different days of week) in order to complete the interview with the designated respondent.

1798 callbacks (651 successfully interviewed after second and/or third visit, No One at Home After Three Visits 843, Respondent Never Available for Appointment 304).

### Refusals/Non-Contacts/Completed Interviews

Reasons for interviews being refused or terminated? How many of each?

1. Outright refusal at the door no explanation 934
2. Security reasons 177
3. Interview terminated 59
4. Suspicious in interview/confidentiality, political reasons 52
5. Respondent never available 304
6. Lack of time, Not interested in interview 296
7. Because of illness 46
8. Company origin 35
9. Already been interviewed by another company 41
10. Other reasons 79

### Refusals by nationality

Bosniaks 935

Croats 569

Serbs 519

### Refusals by gender

Male 978

Female 1045

### Refusals by residence

Urban 1169

Rural 854

Quality Control Methods: Totally controlled 21.4%.

There are two quality controls—by supervisors (min. 10%) and by MIB (min. 5%) controlling both supervisors and interviewers.

All controlled respondents must be selected randomly (used Random Number Generator). Three methods of quality control could be applied:

1. Direct supervision (supervisors present during the interviewing)
2. By address (going on respondent's address after interviewing—by supervisor)
3. By phone (by supervisor and MIB)

Quality control measures including verification of the:

- fact that the interview took place;
- proper application of the sampling plan in selecting the respondent;
- the approximate duration of the interview;
- the proper administration of the various sections of the questionnaire;
- interviewer's general adherence to professional standards.

### Survey Question in English and Bosnian

Can you tell me which of the following happened when you married your spouse? Yes No

- a. We had an engagement party
- b. Elopement (without the parents of the girl knowing)
- c. Traditional wedding
- d. Civil ceremony
- e. Religious ceremony in church or mosque
- f. Brought a dowry (*miraz*)
- g. Living together
- h. Parents of spouses visited each other four or more times a year
- i. Married someone in the same faith

Možete li mi reći na koji način ste se vjenčali sa svojim supružnikom? Da Ne

- a. Imali smo vjeridbu prijevjenčanja
- b. Ukrala se (bez znanja djevojčinih roditelja)
- c. Vjenčanje/Svadba
- d. Vjenčanje u opštini
- e. Vjersko vjenčanje (u crkvi ili džamiji)
- f. Donijeli miraz
- g. Živimo zajedno bez vjenčanja
- h. Da li su se vaši i roditelji vašeg supružnika međusobno posjećivali najmanje četiri puta u toku godine po bilo kojoj osnovi
- i. Da li je vaš supružnik iste religije kao i vi

### Qualitative Interview Protocol

Interviews were arranged by *Žene Ženama* [Women to Women]. The subjects were a voluntary sample who had eloped. The interviews were semi-structured with a set of open-ended questions piloted. The questions were provided to an interviewer, a young woman with family from the region attending graduate school in Sarajevo, contracted by *Žene Ženama*. I was present during the interviews, talked causally with the interviewees in Bosnian, and observed the nonverbal communications of the group. After the interviews, the translator listened to the audio recording and recorded an oral translation of the interview into English, providing additional comments to explain particular words and phrases. I then transcribed the translation while listening to the audio recording in translation and then in Bosnian.

#### Questions

- Did you live in a village? How large was your village? How many households were there?
- From which village did your mother come from? Your father?
- How did your father and mother meet?
- Did they have a wedding ceremony?
- After the match was made, did your father's family visit your mother's family in *mirnost*? Please describe.
- Did your mother's family later visit your father's household in *pohode*? How much later after the marriage? Please describe.
- What is the difference between *ukrala se* and *otmica*?
- Did husbands ever move into their wife's household, *u dao se*? Why?
- If your mother went to your father's household, did she sit in *budžak*, the corner?
- Was the *hodža* involved with the marriage? If so, how?
- How did you meet your spouse? How long did you know each other before getting married and how did you decide to get married?
- Did you have a formal wedding ceremony?
- Did the husband's family go the wife's in *mirnost*?

- 
- Did the wife's family visit the husband's in *pohode*?
  - Did the husband's family then follow with a visit to wife's family in *pohode*?
  - What were the gains and the advantages of the relation of *pri-jatelji* between the two households and for families? How many times a year were there *pohode*? How long did these visits last? Were gifts always brought?

### Consent Form in Bosnian

#### Obrazac za pristanak na intervju

(Ispitanici se potpisuju na dva obrazca, zadržavajući jedan primjerak sebi, dok drugi primjerak ostaje kod ispitivača.)

Ovaj obrazac za pristanak na intervju je nacrt mojih prava kao učesnika u studiji profesora Keitha Doubta sa Univerziteta Wittenberg iz Springfielda, Ohio, SAD, i profesora Asima Mujkića na Univerzitetu Sarajevo. Ovaj intervju ispituje moje stavove i poznavanje sljedećih običaja u zajednici: “ukrala se”, “pohode”, “na mirnost”, i “prijatelji.” Intervju će trajati jedan sat.

Razumijem da:

1. Učestvovanje u ovom intervjuu je potpuno na dobrovoljnoj bazi.
2. Imam pravo odbiti odgovoriti na bilo koje pitanje koje mi se postavi.
3. Sam slobodna/-an prekinuti intervju u bilo kojem trenutku.
4. Mogu zahtijevati da se intervju ne snima.
5. Moje ime i identitet će se držati u potpunoj tajnosti u bilo kojim publikacijama i diskusijama.
6. Moje ime se neće pojaviti na zvučnom zapisu, ili prepisu, koji može rezultirati tokom intervjuja

Pročitala/-o sam ovaj obrazac za pristanak na intervju. Imala/-o sam priliku da postavim pitanja o stvarima koje nisam razumjela/-o.

---

(Potpis ispitanika)

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(Ime ispitanika štampanim slovima)

---

(Datum)

Imate pravo odbiti učešće u ovoj studiji. Tokom intervjuja, imate pravo povući se u bilo kojem trenutku. Očuvanje Vaše anonimnosti je prioritet, i svaka praktična mjera predostrožnosti se poduzima s ciljem prikrivanja Vašeg identiteta. Zvučni zapisi i prepisi intervjuja neće sadržavati bilo kakve informacije o Vašem identitetu. Pod

punom moralnom odgovornošću izjavljujem da neću dozvoliti da iko osim savjetnika za istraživanje presluša zvučni zapis Vašeg glasa, ili da pregleda prepis ovog intervjua. Sav materijal napravljen tokom intervjua (npr. zvučni zapisi i prepisi) ostaje u mom neposrednom vlasništvu.

---

(Potpis ispitivača, i datum)

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# Index

- affinal kinship, 82, 84, 87, 98, 101–103, 123, 127
- agnatic kinship, 82, 83, 87, 98, 102
- Ahearn, Laura, 2–3
- Andrić, Ivo, 7, 19, 36
- ašikovati* (courting), 26
- Banac, Ivo, 131–133
- Barić, Lorraine, 102
- Barth, Fredrik, 18
- Baskar, Bojan, 88n23, 111n12, 133
- Bates, Daniel G., 2, 47, 80, 80n6
- begovi* (elite class), 106
- bi-ethnic marriages, 130–131
- Bosniaks in Turkey, 90–92
- The Bosnian Book of the Dead*, 124n4
- Bougarel, Xavier, 133
- Bourdieu, Pierre, 12, 21, 27, 29, 29n1, 30–36, 30n7, 40, 53
- bratstovi* (brotherhood), 87
- Bringa, Tone, 7–9, 9n28, 11, 41–44, 48–49, 51, 79, 81–87, 91, 93, 95, 101–103, 107, 110, 113n1, 122–123, 131
- Broz, Svetlana, 134
- Brubaker, Rogers, 115–116
- budžak* (village marriage custom), 25, 34, 106, 144
- Burke, Kenneth, 34, 76, 76n8
- conspicuous consumption, 19
- Cvijić, Jovan, 99–101
- Damian, Saint Peter, 87–88, 121
- Dauphinee, Elizabeth, 117n10
- Dayton Peace Accords, 116–117, 132, 135, 137
- “The Dead Man’s Wife” (story by Borisav Stanković), 64
- Devereux, George, 113–116, 118
- discrepant roles, 15
- Donia, Robert, 98, 123n3
- Drina river, 7, 19, 23, 26, 33, 36, 51
- Dundes, Alan, 74
- Durkheim, Émile, 128
- ego-identity, 55–59, 61, 63, 66
- endogamy, 106
- Erikson, Erik H., 12, 55–59, 61
- Erlich, Vera Stein, 6–7, 17, 41, 67
- exogamy, 107
- family folklore, 12, 68–71, 73, 75–77
- fictive abduction, 42–44
- fictive elopement, 43, 49
- Filipović, Milenko, 106–107
- gemeinschaft* (community), 134–135
- gesellschaft* (society), 134
- Gladwell, Malcolm, 40–41
- Goffman, Erving, 15, 15n9, 42–43, 81
- Goode, William J., 5n12
- Gramsci, Antonio, 104, 107–109
- habitus*, 12, 21, 27, 29–37, 39–40, 45, 53
- Halpern, Joel, 65–66
- Hammel, Eugene, 83, 103–104
- Hangi, Anton, 5, 14–15

- Herlihy, David, 84, 87  
 Hörmann, Kosta, 88, 88n23, 111n12  
 human species-being, 36–37
- ideal type, 30n7, 32, 45, 100, 100n12, 115  
 identity statuses, 61–63, 65–66
- Kajmaković, Radmila, 42  
 Karadžić, Vuk Stefanović, 8  
 Kaser, Karl, 99, 101  
 knowledge by acquaintance, 114–116  
 knowledge by description, 114–115  
 Koljević, Svetozar, 64  
*kolo* (circle dance), 24–25, 31–32, 39, 90  
*komšilik* (neighborliness), 111n12, 133–134  
 Konstantinović, Radomir, 86n20
- liminality, 12  
 Lockwood, William G., 7–9, 11, 41, 80–86, 81n6, 95, 97–98, 101, 103, 107, 110, 122–123, 127, 130–131  
 Lockwood, Yvonne, 14n4
- Maggi, Wynne, 2, 4  
 Mahmutćehajić, Rusmir, 127  
 Malinowski, Bronislaw, 82  
 Marcia, James E., 61–65  
 Mareco Index Bosnia, 9–10, 41–44, 92–93, 111, 122, 124–128, 130, 139  
 Marx, Karl, 37  
 McCall, Leslie, 36  
 medieval Bosnia, 84, 88, 111, 123  
*miraz* (dowry), 43–44  
*mirnost* (peace), 81, 93, 144, 146
- nationalism, 86, 86n20, 108, 118, 134–136  
*otmica* (bride abduction), 8–9, 31–32, 144
- Parsons, Talcott, 34  
*pohod* (affinal visitation), 81, 93, 144–146  
*prijatelj* (affines), 5, 12, 56, 80–83, 85, 87–88, 91, 95, 101, 103, 110, 122, 127, 134, 136, 145  
 proletariat, 107–109
- Rheubottom, David B., 85  
 Russell, Bertrand, 114–116
- Sandžak, 90, 118  
 secrets, 12, 15n9, 50  
*sevdalinke* (traditional love songs), 101  
*sijelo* (gathering), 24  
 Simić, Andrei, 65–66, 85–86, 101–102  
 Simmel, Georg, 12, 14n7, 15n9, 45–49, 51  
 Sloan, Kathryn A., 3–4  
 Stanković, Borisav, 64, 66  
 subaltern, 107–110  
*sudbina* (destiny), 35, 75  
*svadba* (traditional wedding), 9, 85, 143
- Tausk, Victor, 50  
*teferić* (festival), 23, 26, 30  
 Tekçe, Belgin, 95  
 thin-slicing, 40–41  
 Tomašić, Dinko, 6–7, 99–101  
 Tönnies, Ferdinand, 134–135  
 Turkish marriage customs, 1–2, 91, 126  
 Turner, Victor, 12–16, 21, 26
- ukrala se* (elopement), 9–10, 18, 21, 31, 50, 52, 14–144, 146  
 Veblen, Thorstein, 19
- Wardlow, Holly, 3–4  
 Weber, Max, 30n7, 32, 34, 45, 100n12
- zadruga* (extended family living unit), 85, 99–102  
*Žene Ženama* (Women to Women), 10–11, 23, 69, 144

Contesting the conventional view that the war of the 1990s annihilated a common Bosnian culture, Keith Doubt demonstrates convincingly that all national communities continue to observe the traditional marriage practice of elopement. With a social scientist's insight and a philosopher's grand vision, he tells a heartening story of human cultural resilience in the face of wartime destruction and political division, offering hope to those who lament that little of value has survived in contemporary Bosnian society.

**Robert J. Donia**, University of Michigan, author of "Sarajevo: A Biography"

*Through the Window: Kinship and Elopement in Bosnia and Herzegovina* looks beyond the region's recent tragic past to uncover trans-ethnic customs that pave the way to a shared future. Keith Doubt has a profound and deeply nuanced understanding of this post-conflict society and the significance of gender within it. As a result, this book is engaging for specialized readers and the general public alike. It certainly deserves attention both in Bosnia and abroad.

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